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38.

171.

EVENING

MEDITATIONS;

OR,

A SERIES OF REFLECTIONS

ON VARIOUS PASSAGES OF

Holy Scripture and Scriptural Poetry,

FOR

EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

THE RETROSPECT, MORNING MEDITATIONS,

&c. &c. &c.

LONDON:

JAMES NISBET AND CO. BERNERS STREET.

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PREFACE.

FROM the favourable reception which the Author's little book of "*Morning Meditations*" found at the hands of many pious and tried christian readers, he has been encouraged to send forth the present sister volume. It will at once be seen that this is not a work calculated to amuse the thoughtless, or to interest the giddy and dissipated portion of mankind; but that, on the contrary, it is expressly intended for those who are desirous of setting the Lord always before them, for individuals who consider themselves as standing on the confines of time, and expecting shortly to be launched into eternity. Many of its little papers were written in seasons of pain, depression, and illness, when it was at once a duty and privilege to entreat a sanctified use of these afflictions, and to divert the mind as much as possible from them, and those feuds and agitation that distracted the writer's parish and grieved his heart. He ever found it good to turn aside from these strifes and contentions, and to direct the meditative eye of faith to happier and holier things, and thus, by frequent contemplation, to realize the divine presence, and the events of

death, judgment, and salvation, together with other subjects connected with the Christian's warfare on earth, and with his eternal rest and glory in heaven. Hence these solemn and important topics have been again and again brought forward for the evening's meditation. Should the reader find as much interest in thinking over them as the writer has frequently done in committing them to paper, they certainly will not go forth in vain.

There will be found a few extracts from Baxter, Watts, and Dwight, which having deeply impressed his own mind, he believed they would be edifying to his readers also. That the Lord may graciously own this humble work to his own glory, and to the comfort and spiritual advancement of his children, is the writer's earnest prayer.

R. M.

GREAT MISSENDEN,
Sept. 1838.

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EVENING MEDITATIONS.

JANUARY 1.

"*Ye know not what shall be on the morrow.*"—James iv. 14.

And if we know not what a *day* may bring forth, far less are we able to know what the *year* now just entered on will bring to pass! Of this, however, we may be sure, that many, that great, and frequently distressing changes and events await millions of the sons and daughters of Adam! Many a social band of friends—many a social and happy domestic circle will be broken up before this year is completed. And those members who now meet, and see each other's faces with gladness, will, ere long, meet thus no more! Many, who now go to the house of God together as friends, will cease to walk side by side to worship their common Lord. Death, and various other providences, will scatter many of the former classes far and wide from each other; and the wickedness of bad men, and the weaknesses and prejudices of good men, may sever no few of the latter. Amidst the growing and wide-spreading bickerings, contentions, and party strifes of the times, how many a spirit, now buoyant with hope, and cheerful in the company of its professed christian friends, will be sorrow-smitten, and half broken-hearted at the changes which these contentions will bring over the minds of those they now imagine will be kindred spirits, even unto the end. And thus it is, that by reason of death, and of numberless other events, 'Friend after friend departs.' Holy and ever-blessed Lord God, may every consideration of these solemn truths raise my soul nearer to thee and to thy kingdom, for Jesus Christ our Redeemer's sake. Amen.

JANUARY 2.

" Friend after friend departs,
Who hath not lost a friend?
There is no union here of hearts
That finds not here an end;
Were this frail life our only rest,
Living or dying, none were blest."

How truly do these lines fall in with the facts of every man's history as he looks through the year just closed, and carries his retrospect through a few of its predecessors? Each has swept off some friend, or divided him from some companion! Oh, were there no meeting again—no future day, when those who were once so near and dear shall hail and bless each other; then, 'Living and dying none were blest.' True it is, that the friends in Christ Jesus are clothed with mortality, even as others; and each in his appointed time must taste of death; but the survivors of this happy family know, that the others are 'not lost, but gone before.' Having fallen asleep in Jesus, these same shall Jesus bring again with him. Has the love of God been shed abroad in kindred hearts by the Holy Ghost, then shall they meet again, and be for ever with their Lord! When I think only of the departure, the absence, and present loss of my beloved christian friends, I cannot but weep; but when I recollect that every passing day brings me nearer to the edge of the wilderness—nearer to the promised Canaan, and nearer to those whose absence I now mourn, I take courage and wipe off the starting tear, and bless and praise Thee, thou Saviour, thou Lord of life and death, that

" There is a world above,
Where parting is unknown;
A long eternity of love,
Formed for the saints alone;
And faith beholds the dying here
Translated to that glorious sphere!"

JANUARY 3.

"*This year, perhaps, the hand of death*
May snatch my soul away;
That awful hand may stop my breath
Before the opening day."

THIS is a solemn consideration with which to enter on a new year; but if we shrink back from entertaining it while in health, how shall we be able to ponder it in our mind when sickness brings us to our couch? *Death*, however terrific to poor human nature, and to the Christless, graceless soul, is actually set down in the catalogue of the believer's rich blessings. Not that it is so, abstractedly considered, but it is so, in that it liberates the soul from its earthly prison, and is the event that admits it to a state in which it mounts, and soars away; and leaving all that is mortal and vain, all that is sinful and sorrowful, behind, it enters into everlasting life and glory in the kingdom of its Redeemer; and there it lives and reigns with him for ever. Lord, God Almighty! thou that hearest and answerest prayer, give us grace to look on every setting sun with a composed, a tranquil, and happy mind, while we remember it is quite possible that it has shone on us for the last time here below. May we keep all our earthly concerns settled up as much as possible with the close of every day, and so stay our souls on thee in the faith and hope of the gospel, as to be kept in perfect peace. Lord, I pray thee

"To keep this foolish heart of mine
From anxious passions free;
Teach me each comfort to resign,
And trust my all to thee.
If mercy smiles, let mercy bring
My grateful soul to God;
And in affliction I shall sing,
If thou wilt bless the rod."

JANUARY 4.

" It is sown in corruption: it is raised in incorruption." 1 Cor. xv. 42.

In contemplating the nature of the human frame, there is much to raise our admiration of the divine Architect, and much to humble, and to distress ourselves. The body, fearfully and wonderfully as it is made, is, in its present nature, a corruptible body. " One of the most striking characteristics of the human frame, in its present state, is its universal tendency to decay. This frequently appears, and often fatally, in its earliest existence, and at every succeeding stage of its progress. It is, however, most visible and affecting after it has passed the middle point of life. Then decay arrests it in many forms, and with irresistible power; then the limbs gradually stiffen, the faculties lose their vigour, the strength declines, the face becomes overspread with wrinkles, and the head with the locks of age. Health, at the same time, recedes by degrees, even from the firmest constitution; pains multiply, feebleness and languor lay hold on the whole system, and death at length seizes the frame as his prey, and changes it to corruption and to dust.

"A mighty and glorious difference will be made in our nature, when the body revives from the grave. All the evils and accidents which befel it in the present world will have then lost their power. Hunger, thirst, weakness, declension, death, and corruption are bounded by the tomb. Those who rise to the resurrection of life, ' will hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.' Firm, enduring, unassailable by distress, and proof against the undermining progress of years, they will, ' like gold tried in the fire,' remain bright and indestructible through the endless succession of ages."—*(Dwight.)*

JANUARY 5.

"*Thy kingdom come.*"—Matt. vi. 10.

He who taught us thus to pray has, by the mouth of his holy prophets and apostles, affirmed that its arrival is sure and certain. The kingdom here prayed for is the spiritual kingdom, and reign, and rule of Christ Jesus; and it will extend its blessed sway over every climate and kingdom of the earth, and be set up and established in every heart wherever a descendant of Adam exists. And oh, what a new and glorious scene will the world then present! Hitherto it has groaned and travailed together in pain, under the awful effects of sin! Every crime that man can commit, both against God and against his fellow man, has been, and still is committed. Every sort of misery that lust and violence, fraud and oppression, murder, wrong and robbery can produce, have been and still are inflicted. Men have brutalized themselves far beyond the brute creation; and often have they proved more cruel to each other than the lions and tigers of the desert. But this state of things is to come to an end. Where sin hath abounded, grace is much more to abound; and this moral desert is to blossom as the rose. This wilderness, now so barren of every thing good, is to become as the garden of Eden. In other words, the whole world is to be brought under the renovating and purifying influence of the Gospel of Christ. The whole earth is to be filled with the knowledge, the saving knowledge of the Lord, as the waters fill the sea. The whole family of mankind will individually and collectively become the regenerated and sanctified sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Oh, thou God of all grace, in whose hands are the hearts of all men, and with whom are the issue of all events, hasten this thy glorious kingdom among us, for Jesus Christ our Redeemer's sake.

JANUARY 6.

"*Thy kingdom come.*"—Matt. vi. 10.

It is a plainly declared fact that there are a diversity of orders and ranks among the inhabitants of heaven. And there is every reason to believe that, during the millennial age on earth, there will be distinctions and diversities of rank and talents, and of moral and spiritual attainments, as well as in the various callings, pursuits, and employments of mankind; nor will such an arrangement deduct from the happiness of any individual on earth, any more than the present arrangements of heaven deduct from the perfect felicity of saints and angels above. It is *sin*, and not the diversified orders and ranks among men, which ever has occasioned, and which now occasions all the misery that afflicts mankind and embitters human life. But sin will be wonderfully diminished, during the millennium, by these two great acts of a merciful and gracious God; namely, Satan will be forbidden to tempt, deceive, or perplex mankind; and a large portion of the sanctifying Spirit will be poured out upon all flesh. No sooner shall this happen, but the kingdom of God will be come; and his will and pleasure will be done on earth by all men, and under all circumstances. Whatever forms of government shall then regulate the affairs of different nations and of different churches, all will be done after the will of God, and carried forward in the very spirit of the Gospel of Christ, and harmony and love will pervade the whole! Thus there will not be a single plant growing in the whole vineyard of spiritual or of temporal affairs but what the Lord hath planted. Through all ranks, and in every heart, will be found love, joy, peace, gentleness, goodness, and truth; and God will be glorified in all things, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

JANUARY 7.

"*For thus saith the* LORD, *Behold I will extend peace unto her like a river, and the glory of the Gentiles like a flowing stream.*"—Isaiah lxvi. 12.

THIS, with many similar predictions, are given as descriptive of that millennial happiness which shall in due time bless the world—when the real, holy, and happy Church of the first-born shall lengthen its cords and fix its stakes to the uttermost limits of the habitable globe; and all its children be "holiness unto the LORD." Oh! blessed and happy time, "when none shall hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain"—when every heart shall be a living purified temple of the Holy Ghost,—when every tongue shall find its sweetest employ in singing and proclaiming the praises of God, and every hand shall be stretched forth in acts of kindness towards every man that needs its help. Yet will this be an earthy state, and infinitely below the felicity of that rest which remains for the people of God in heaven. For even in the millennial age, men will be subject to decay, to pain, and sickness, and death. Nor can it be otherwise but that some portion of trial and sorrow will at times find way to the heart of every child of God, so long as the soul is present with the body and absent from the Lord. Yet will the Lord Jehovah extend his peace as a river—it shall flow on, and it shall widen, and deepen in all the blessings and enjoyments of still nearer and sweeter communion with God and his Christ, until, like an earthly river, it mingles with the ocean, the endless boundless ocean of the manifested love of God in his own presence and kingdom for ever, and for ever. O Lord God of Hosts, hasten this time, and sanctify, bless, and save mankind according to thy many great and precious promises, for Jesus Christ's sake.

JANUARY 8.

"*That they may be all one.*"—John xvii. 21.

When, oh! when, shall this prayer receive its accomplishment? when shall the professors of Christianity become one united host of brethren, all lovely in themselves, and all loving each other as the united members of the family of Christ? As yet, divisions, contentions, and strifes rend and tear them into sections and parties of almost every name, and form, and doctrine. The unity of the Spirit, and the bond of peace are blessings we read of in Holy Writ—but they are things almost entirely unseen, unknown, and unfelt among men! This unhappy state of things must, however, pass away; and an answer of peace be given to our Emmanuel's request. A time will yet come when, even on earth, "all shall know the Lord, from the least, unto the greatest;" and when the Spirit is poured out on all flesh; and the great enemy of souls is forbidden to tempt and deceive mankind any more; then "peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety," will universally bless the earth. The whole family of man may then be expected to be one in a happy, experimental knowledge of the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, one in kindness and brotherly love to each other, one, in a holy deadness to every undue, earthly, creature attachment, and one, in a very high and holy state of spiritual mindedness, and of near and sweet communion with God. Yea, more, they will be so sweetly linked together in the bands of a constraining, holy, disinterested christian affection, as to be of one heart, and of one mind; and thus, in a measure, their oneness will resemble that inseparable union, that mysterious oneness which exists between God the Father and God the Son. Even so, Lord Jesus. Amen.

JANUARY 9.

"Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us."—Psalm lxvii. 6.

The grand fulfilment of this promise remains to be accomplished in the millennial age. Before man sinned he was surrounded by an Eden, and during a certain period of the Israelites' sojourn in the land of promise, that country was as a garden of the Lord's right hand planting. But sin in its first outbreak utterly stript Eden; and it was sin, in after ages, that brought desolation and barrenness over the land of Canaan; in which condition it now lies. But as the Holy Spirit will, by and by, be poured out in a most abundant manner, and as Satan will be restrained, for a thousand years, from his work of tempting and defiling mankind; and as the various kingdoms of this world will become the spiritual, regenerated, happy, and soul-devoted kingdoms of our God and his Christ; so will the earth again be blessed with a fertility, and made to produce an increase of all its natural fruits, even as the people will bring forth their increase of the fruits of the Spirit. This abundant fertility of the ground will undoubtedly add much to the blessings and enjoyments of men. But, after all, their greater blessings will spring out of their holiness and conformity to the mind and moral perfections of God. Mankind will then be blessed with much heavenly knowledge; and exempt from a thousand sorrows, sicknesses, and troubles which the present rule of sin is every where producing in the world. This blessing of holiness will, as to extent, be universal. "The people shall all be righteous;" "all the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Even so, Lord Jesus, let it come quickly, Amen! Amen!

JANUARY 10.

"*The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever.*" Isa. xxxii. 17.

In the millennial age or latter day's glory this promise will have an accomplishment far beyond our present conceptions. By the divine agency of the Holy Ghost, righteousness, peace, truth, purity, faith, and love will render the earth, in some measure, like heaven itself. "By his energetic power he will new create men all over the world; and then repentance, faith, and holiness, will as certainly prevail, as impenitence, unbelief, and unholiness, have in the past ages of the world. Still, however, Christianity will be the religion of *sinners*. Hence there still may be some defects in believers; for men will not be born holy, but be made so by regeneration and grace. They will, therefore, continue exposed to some natural evils, as well as to death. Yet will the prevalence of true Christianity produce such a measure of righteousness and peace in the world, that moral and natural evil will be diminished far beyond our present conceptions." Dying chambers will, no doubt, witness some tears of natural feeling and affection shed over beloved departing relatives and friends; yet will grace, and faith, and hope light up every countenance, and rejoice every heart. As to the dying saints, they will depart *full* of faith and immortality; knowing that one step more brings them for ever to their Lord. And the survivors will have such bright and steady apprehensions of that kingdom and glory, whither their beloved friends and relatives are already gone, and such an assurance of their own speedy arrival there, that the peace of God will keep their hearts and minds so sweetly staid upon Christ, as to enable them really to rejoice in these tribulations.

JANUARY 11.

"*The High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy.*"—Isaiah lvii. 15.

LET us pause and contemplate the description which the inspired prophet here gives of that God with whom we all have to do—"*The High and Lofty One!*"—the Lord Jehovah, the self-existent, Immutable, Omnipresent, Omniscient, Almighty, and independent Lord God! the Maker, Preserver, Benefactor, and Ruler of all things in heaven and on earth. "*That inhabiteth Eternity*"—constituting, pervading, filling all space and all eternity, past, present, and to come!—without beginning of days, or end of time! From everlasting to everlasting the same Eternal God!—"*whose name is Holy!*" whose every attribute is essential holiness! the author of all that is holy in heaven and on earth—in angels and men! whose moral, providential, and spiritual government are in every part holy, both as to what he *does* and what he *permits*. So holy in himself, and so wise, that in the comparison, "the heavens are not pure in his sight, and his angels he chargeth with folly!" Oh this uncreated, this uncaused, this mysterious, this Almighty Lord God!! May we ever feel it our highest happiness, our honour and glory, to worship, and love, and serve Him in the gospel of his Son Jesus Christ while we are on earth, and thence may we in his own appointed time be permitted to unite "with angels and archangels, and all the hosts of heaven, in lauding and magnifying his glorious name above; ever more praising him, and saying, holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory: glory be to thee, O Lord most high." Amen.

JANUARY 12.

"*Death is yours.*"—1 Corinth. iii. 22.

To those who know, who love and live on the joyful sound of the gospel of Christ Jesus, this Scripture applies; such characters may be of various degrees of grace, and not a few of them are encompassed with many infirmities. Yet as they are looking to Christ, and to him alone for salvation, and as they are, amidst all their infirmities, really labouring and desiring to follow him in newness of life, they certainly will behold his face with joy. But the Jordan of death must be passed by every one of them before they can enter on the land of promise, that heavenly Canaan which remains for the people of God. Now when we contemplate the origin, the cause, and the nature of death, we cannot but consider it as a most solemn, nay, as an awful event both in itself and in the overwhelmingly important, the eternal consequences that follow. To the by-standers it looks every thing that is afflictive. To the individual departing, it is the last and finishing stroke of the body's humiliation. It removes the person from every earthly attachment and every earth-born hope and prospect beneath the sun. It is indeed a token of righteous displeasure against sin. Every dying couch proclaims, that man has sinned, and God is angry. It is to all the unprepared, unrenewed, and unpardoned of mankind, the awful step which lands the undying spirit in that kingdom which a sin-hating God hath prepared for the devil and his angels; where their worm dieth not and their fire is not quenched! but to the humble, self-renouncing believer in Jesus, even *death* is converted into a boon, a blessing. It is one of his present and eternal mercies, "death is theirs."

JANUARY 13.

"*Death is yours.*"—1 Corinth. iii. 22.

It was observed in our former meditation on this subject, that *death* is the appointed lot of all men, and the immediate step which conducts the soul to the enjoyments of everlasting life. It is indeed among the covenant mercies of every real spiritual believer in Christ Jesus. However awful to the unrepenting and unpardoned despiser of Christ, it comes to his own children as a friend, and not as an enemy; as the harbinger of rest, and not of labour; as a messenger of peace, and not as a king of terrors. It comes, indeed, as a dissolution, but not as destruction—it is to them real gain. Oh, what a happy and instant change will death bring to all the pains and sinkings of the body, and to all the anxieties and conflicts of the soul! At once the unseen world bursts on their view! at once, joy unspeakable and full of glory takes possession of the soul; at once, mortality is swallowed up of life,—all infirmities, imperfections, sins, sorrows, and evils are removed; and holiness, immortality, heaven, and Christ are the portion, and will for ever be the inheritance of the liberated spirit! and all this because the individuals are Christ's; because, in every instance, Christ is precious to their souls. Having no other hope or trust but in his precious salvation, and amidst all their many and great imperfections, still following on, desirous of loving and serving him, they shall soon and certainly be with the Lord. Let us, therefore, meditate frequently on this subject; while death wears a gloomy aspect to the poor body, let us treasure up in our minds some of those great and precious promises made for our consolation by our heavenly Father, who giveth all his children the victory through Jesus Christ.

JANUARY 14.

"O! could we make our doubts remove
These gloomy doubts that rise,
And see the Canaan that we love,
With unbeclouded eyes."

And what are these distressing doubts—and whence are they? They are doubts whether our sins are pardoned, and God reconciled to us through the merits and sacrifice of his beloved Son. They arise out of a want of ability to take the promises of the gospel to ourselves, while it is the recollection, from time to time, of our past transgressions on the one hand, and of the transcendent holiness of the Almighty on the other, that gives point and force to these fears. Great faith honours God, but all the Lord's real children have it not. Many things rob us of this privilege and blessing; or rather prevent our ever enjoying it in any great degree. Many diseases, infirmities, and injuries which the body may inherit from its parents, or have incurred by accidents, may greatly depress the animal spirits, and throw a melancholy desponding gloom over the mind, quite independent of religious feelings. In these cases, the gospel will considerably compose a troubled soul, but it will neither heal disease or change the constitutional temperament. Prayer is the grand appointed remedy, and on many occasions, the medical friend will, through the divine blessing, assist in dispelling the gloom. It will also be good to bear in mind that it is the nature of many bodily infirmities to produce this state of feeling, and ever to recollect that there are many precious souls who are going on sorrowfully, but safely, towards that kingdom where all tears are wiped away. In the school of Christ there are babes in faith as well as babes in every other grace of the Spirit. Meanwhile, seek an increase from him who is the author and finisher of faith; and more shall be given.

JANUARY 15.

"*The sting of death is sin.*"—1 Corinth. xv. 56.

"THE very worst and most destructive thing in death is the guilt of sin, which, if unremoved, causes not only a separation of the soul and body, but of both soul and body from God; not merely for a season, but for ever. It is *this* that fills death with its terrors, and, like the sting of a serpent, makes it so fearfully hurtful as it is; were it not for *this*, the merely dying would be of little consequence, considering what a poor, empty, vexatious world we live in." Would we then encounter this last enemy with courage, safety and victory, let us daily and hourly endeavour to live a life of faith in the Son of God, a life of such faith as shall purify the heart, and work by love, and overcome the world. Many professors of the gospel read books to obtain *comfort*, and run from one preacher to another to hear *comforting* sermons, and still they are found continually complaining that the comforter who should refresh their soul is far away. Yes, and the cause of his absence is, in many cases, clearly seen by every stander-by; there is some Achan in the camp, or a divided lukewarm heart, a careless, unprofitable, unedifying walk and conversation. Such a course as this will shut them out from all the happy consolations of the Holy Ghost, even in their brightest days of worldly prosperity and bodily health; and in the chamber of sickness, and especially in the hour of death, it will, indeed, pierce them with many sorrows. O Lord God of Hosts, give us grace to depart from every iniquity. Oh give us victory over the power and over the condemnation of sin, through the merits and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and redeemed us from the curse of the law, having been made a curse for us.

JANUARY 16.

"Jesus, I cast my soul on thee,
Mighty and merciful to save;
Thou wilt to death go down with me,
And gently lay me in the grave.
This body then shall rest in hope,
This body which the worms destroy;
For surely thou wilt bring me up,
To glorious life and endless joy."

THE presence of Christ vouchsafed to a departing child of Adam is more than enough to dispel every fear, and reconcile it to the leaving of all behind. It can fill the departing soul with joy unspeakable and full of glory, as to its own future destiny; and as concerning those we are about to be parted from, it can give such a sweet assurance of the Lord's providence and grace being with them, that there will not remain one anxious thought, or doubt, or fear, as to their journey across this wilderness world. In this happy and privileged state, the sick and fainting sufferer may look on his rapidly wasting limbs, and count his agitated fluttering pulse, and perceive every day more and more symptoms of his earthly dissolution, and yet, he shall feel no one desire that things should be otherwise. O Lord, grant that it may indeed be thus with him who writes, and with all who read these meditations; at that solemn period may it be our one, our only heart-felt deep desire to live, to suffer, to faint, and to die in that state of faith and patience, of hope and resignation, of peace and joy, which shall be to the glory of the riches of thy grace, and become the means, in thy hands, of winning souls to Christ, in hungering and thirsting after such precious salvation for themselves.

JANUARY 17.

" 'Tis but one family,—the sound is balm,—
A seraph-whisper to the wounded heart;
It lulls the storm of sorrow to a calm,
And draws the venom from the avenger's dart.
'Tis but one family,—the accents come
Like light from heaven to break the night of woe,
The banner-cry, to call the spirit home,
The shout of vict'ry o'er a fallen foe."

Such is the church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven, gathered in from the four winds of the earth; and redeemed and sanctified through the Saviour's blood, they are of one language, and of one heart. They are spirits made perfect in all heavenly features, according to their measure and capacities, for receiving out of all the fulness of God! Diversified, indeed, like the stars in the firmament, they will still shine forth with individual glory; while they mingle, like the beauteous tints of the bow, in sweet harmony, mutually adding to each other's felicity, while all will be produced by the imparted grace and glory of Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, who will unceasingly cast his beams upon them. Farewell, then, for ever farewell, to all our present contentions, and strifes, and jealousies. No more from thenceforth will envy, or selfishness, or uncharitableness, in any shape or degree, break in upon or interrupt their universal harmony and love. Oh, what a contrast to our present unhappy condition! Were it not for this cheering, brightening prospect as to the future, my heart would be ready to break under the evils of the present. Lord, send forth thy Spirit in all the holy converting power of omnipotence, and stay the march of that ungodly temper which at this moment hurries on so many professors of thy gospel into contentions and worldly strife, into fury and bitterness of spirit with each other.

JANUARY 18.

"Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."
Psalm lxxxvii. 3.

THIS is true, if we apply these words as descriptive of the church of Christ in its promised glorious state on earth in the millennial age, but far more emphatic, if referred to the kingdom of God above. How truly astonishing are those things which, in various parts of the Scriptures, are spoken concerning the revealed majesty and glory of the Godhead—the splendour, the purity, and wisdom of the angelic hosts—the perfection, felicity, and holiness of the saints—the occupations, employments, and services of all orders and ranks in that world where the ever-blessed God glorifies his equal Son, and the Son of God glorifies his happy children, and brings them near his throne, and makes all things new! Holy and ever-blessed Spirit! thou revealer of the things of God, help us to form such high and holy conceptions of these things as shall be for the glory of God, and the growth of our own souls in all spirituality and heavenly-mindedness, as we journey onward to its possession. And, oh grant, that as soon as I yield up the ghost, and my soul is absent from the body, that those ministering spirits who have watched over me, even unto the end, may then take me by the hand, saying, "Come, our be-beloved charge, and mount with us; we will take thee unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first-born, who are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant!" Lord! Thou hast promised to do more than we can ask or conceive. O let it be unto us according to thy word, for Jesus Christ our Redeemer's sake.

JANUARY 19.

"*Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.*"
Psalm lxxxvii. 3.

"*Ye are come unto Mount Sion, (or Zion,) and unto the city of the living God.*"—Heb. xii. 22.

THERE certainly is, in the wide universe of the ever-living and eternal God, a peculiar place, which may be considered as the metropolis of his boundless empire, where Deity takes up its more especial residence; where the Lord Jehovah gathers his happy subjects of all ranks and orders about him; where he displays his glory, and receives the homage of angels and of glorified spirits made perfect, and where he manifests himself in and through the Lord Jesus Christ visibly, as he does not in any other part of his boundless empire. In the text which heads these reflections, we are led to contemplate Mount Sion (Zion) and Jerusalem as typical of this more immediate residence of our God. Mount Zion was indeed the city of the great kings of Israel—the city of their solemnities. It was the place which God chose, and loved beyond all the dwellings of Jacob; and there his glory rested over the mercy-seat in the holy temple. "To it the tribes went up, even as the redeemed of the Lord shall do at last to the heavenly Zion. It is impossible to read the glorious things spoken of Mount Zion, remembering that it is now a desolation, but our attention must be drawn to that city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Earthly Zion and all her splendour has passed away, but turning our eyes towards heaven, we there discover a sure *foundation*, which shall never be removed; a *throne* which shall never be shaken; melodious *songs* and *harps* which shall never be unstrung, nor hang any more on the willows."

JANUARY 20.

"*Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.*"
Psalm lxxxvii. 3.

"*Ye are come unto the heavenly Jerusalem.*"—Heb. xii. 22.

THE many glorious things thus spoken are for our encouragement on the one hand, and for our instruction on the other. When infidels would beset us with their gloomy and despairing statements, and popery with its baseless inventions, and novelists, and unbelieving sentimentalists with their licentious and earthly views of a future state; on all these occasions are we to turn to the word and testimony, and learn from thence what is written concerning that kingdom which God hath prepared for those who love him; that kingdom is here termed the '*heavenly Jerusalem.*' And as Canaan and Jerusalem were the glory of all lands,* so will the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, be the glory of all the kingdoms and worlds above. "Every thing suited to his greatness and glory, and *to the eternal felicity* of all ranks and degrees of his redeemed and glorified creatures, must be found there. Every thing suited to the worship and enjoyment of God, present and visible in the Son of his love, and every thing suited to delight the vision, and whatever other senses the inhabitants may possess, will be found there. Even in this sin-smitten and disorganized world there is much grandeur and beauty left to gratify the sight, but in the city of God, the heavenly Jerusalem, there will be inconceivably more yet." Lord bring us thither, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

* Ezek. xxv. 6.

JANUARY 21.

"Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God."
Psalm lxxxvii. 3.

"Ye are come to an innumerable company of angels."
Heb. xii. 22.

In the Holy Scriptures our attention is called to contemplate heaven, as the place where we shall meet and associate with "an innumerable company of angels," not meet and part as "guests that call, and tarry but a night," but as associates with whom we shall pass an endless eternity. This is, therefore, one important feature in the nature and state of that world, to which, as believers and followers of Christ in the regeneration, we are hastening; surely then it is our duty and privilege to enquire somewhat concerning these our future destined companions; and especially so, as it hath pleased our heavenly Father, in the Scriptures, to open heaven to a considerable extent to our view; and to furnish us, in many particulars, with an account of these most happy beings, these highest, holiest, and most exalted of all created intelligences. Oh, that the Holy Spirit may daily produce more of an angel-like state of soul within us, as we draw nearer to the limits of time, and thus make us "meet," in a very high degree, for mingling in their ranks, for uniting in their praises, and for doing the will of God, in all things, in all employments, in all places in that his own peculiar city, with the same intense ardour, the same holy mind, the same inexpressible felicity that they themselves ever do it. Lord, it is thyself that inspires such desires within us; surely thou art willing to grant the things Thou hast thyself stirred up the soul to long after. While angels are in heaven, and we are on earth, yet, do Thou carry us thitherward, *in the spirit*, and thy name shall have all the glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

JANUARY 22.

"Ye are come to an innumerable company of angels."
Heb. xii. 22.

"ANGELS are the highest order of intellectual creatures. The truth of this assertion is manifest, from a consideration of the several names given to them in the word of God. There we hear of them as being thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, in the immense and eternal empire of Jehovah. Angels, therefore, who are called by these names, are the beings who, under God the supreme Ruler, hold throughout his dominion, authority, and power: all other finite beings are therefore beneath them in dignity and honour. They are styled angels; that is, the immediate messengers of God. They are styled thrones, dominions, authorities, principalities, or governments, and powers; to denote that they sit upon thrones, exercise dominion, hold authority, preside in government, and are invested with the power necessary for these great purposes. They are called chief princes, to denote that they are the first order of rulers in the universe, under Him who has 'prepared his throne in the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all.' They are called Sons of God, to teach us that they are beings nearly related to God in character, favour, place, and authority. They are called morning stars, to teach us the splendour and glory with which they outshine all other intelligent creatures. They are named cherubim and seraphim, to inform us that they are beings furnished with superior knowledge to discern, and with superior holiness to pursue, whatever is good and right; whatever is honourable to the Creator and useful to his creatures." *(Dwight.)* Lord, forbid that I should be content with any companions found in this polluted, erring, dying world.

JANUARY 23.

"*Ye are come to an innumerable company of angels.*"
Heb. xii. 22.

The all-wise and ever-gracious God has ordained that eternal and ever-increasing happiness shall flow to his redeemed children in heaven from various sources, or rather through various channels; for, correctly speaking, he himself is the one and only fountain and source, as he alone ordains and appoints every channel through which the blessing and enjoyment flow to us. Among these numerous channels, by which much of our felicity will be derived, we may now fix our thoughts on that of communion and intercourse with this innumerable company of angels; every one of whom will take as much delight in imparting information to us, as we shall in receiving it from them. In contemplating the profits and happiness of such intercourse, it must be remembered, "that angels are endowed with the greatest intellectual faculties, and are of course possessed of knowledge superior to that of any other created beings. Their faculties were, at first, such as became the morning stars of the brightest heavens; the sons of God, intended to surround the throne of Jehovah, and to hold the chief places of power, distinction, and glory, in his eternal kingdom. They were such, in a word, as to become their other transcendent attributes of power, youth, and activity, and the exalted stations which they were destined to fill for ever. Such they were at first created; and they have, ever since that period, dwelt in that world where truth reigns without opposition, where knowledge is the universal state and character, where all mysteries are continually disclosed, and where the book of Providence is unfolded as it is not in any other part of the universe of God."—*(Dwight.)*

JANUARY 24.

"Ye are come to an innumerable company of angels."
Heb. xii. 22.

When the redeemed soul is brought unto these inhabitants of heaven, it will instantly perceive that no small portion of its felicity does, and will consist in its intercourse with them. Next to the Lord himself these are the holiest, the wisest, the purest, the most benevolent and perfect beings in existence. Now these inconceivably holy and intelligent creatures will admit the ransomed sinner into their ranks, with all the willingness, rapture, and love peculiar to angels. Nothing that they can communicate will be held back; nothing that they can do will be left unperformed for the instruction and advancement of our souls into their own likeness. In such company, and with such examples ever before us, we must become wiser, and make continual advances in all the distinguishing features of heavenly understanding and of heavenly graces. And oh, what wonders will these angels be able to unfold to all their newly-arrived companions, concerning ten thousand things, of which the latter either knew nothing at all, or at most, had but a faint, confused, and glimmering idea of; nor must it be forgotten, that every new scene they behold, and every new theme they listen to, will communicate new and increasing raptures of wonder, love, and praise; and on the other hand, these very angels themselves are destined to make continual advances in their knowledge of the ways and works of God, and especially in his moral government, as pertaining to and exhibited in the dispensations of his providence and grace in connection with our world, and the redemption of mankind through the mediation, merits, and atonement of the Son of God himself.

JANUARY 25.

"Ye are come to an innumerable company of angels."
Heb. xii. 22.

MILLIONS of these have already been employed; and millions of them will yet be engaged in ministering to the heirs of salvation in this world. The deep interest which these benevolent spirits have ever taken in the affairs and happiness of the saints will not end here, but continue to expand through all eternity. Having watched by the dying bed, and seen the body give up the ghost, they no longer conceal themselves, but become visible to their beloved charge, and at once speed their way with the liberated soul into the kingdom of heaven. From thenceforth they will be with them as companions and fellow worshippers, as instructors and fellow helpers in the songs and services of the heavenly world. From them will the redeemed children of Adam hear continually new tales of wonder and delight; and learn of many an event that as yet never reached the ear of mortal, nor could be understood by an earthly being. And oh, how many things connected with the poor sinner's preservation, conversion, sanctification, and final perseverance will they not unfold! Nor will these tales be heard with cold indifference. Every relation will fill their listening souls with rapture, love, and praise. In all, and by all, they will be led into more exalted views, into more intense reverence, and into more inexpressible love of Him who hath loved them with an everlasting love, and who, in his loving-kindness, drew them, and held them, and saved them with an everlasting salvation; and who hath brought them unto himself, that where he is they may ever be also.

JANUARY 26.

"Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect."
Heb. xii. 23.

And is it possible that such an assembly will admit me into their ranks? can they find any pleasure in my society, or feel any delight in imparting their minds to me? Yes, they will come forth as my brethren, and welcome me as one of the family and church of the first-born. For, however holy, happy, and perfect they may now be, it is certain, that once they were apostates, rebels, and outcasts like myself. Once they were children of wrath, because they were children of disobedience; and like myself, had they been left to the workings of their own hearts, they would have, they must have perished for ever. The same grace, that I humbly hope has renewed my heart, did turn every one of them from darkness unto light, from the power of Satan unto God. Every one of them was renewed by the divine goodness, sanctified by the mysterious influence, and cleansing inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Each individual of that happy and ever-blessed assembly was once *lost*, or in a lost condition, and every one was recovered by grace previous to being found in the kingdom of heaven. Not one among their countless myriads but was redeemed from destruction, and raised from absolute condemnation and perdition to that endless life, that holiness and glory, in which they now stand before the throne of God and the Lamb. In all these particulars we shall exhibit a likeness, and these circumstances will give an interest in every bosom for the everlasting happiness of every other redeemed companion. Oh, the unspeakable mercy of being brought to dwell for ever with the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven!

JANUARY 27.

"Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect."
Heb. xii. 23.

Oh, blessed assembly, made perfect in holiness, in felicity, and in love to God and to each other! "On every one of you doth the Lord Jesus look with ineffable delight, and everlasting love, as his saved and glorified children—the purchase and reward of his sufferings—the children whom God hath given him—the result of the travail of his soul, in each and in all of whose everlasting happiness he is well satisfied! Oh, happy and highly honoured assembly! Ye are the adopted children of God, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; God will acknowledge you as such, and put you in possession of an inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away—an inheritance eternal in the heavens—a kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. In this character ye will behold and love each other, and feel yourselves united in bonds of intense affection and pure love, utterly surpassing any thing that ever existed before!

"Made of one blood—sprung from the same loins—redeemed from sin and misery by the same Jesus—renewed by the same Spirit of God—fellow members of Christ's church—fellow travellers in the same journey to heaven—and now brought to the same glorious inheritance. Here ye will ever be of one mind and of one heart. No difference of judgment or opinion—no coldness, jealousy, or suspicion—but love, confidence, and delight in each other's glory and blessedness. Ye will be one in songs of praise—one in adoration and love to Him who sitteth on the throne and to the Lamb for ever." This, O my soul, this is the company thou art one day to join. These are the companions with whom thou art to pass an endless eternity.

JANUARY 28.

"I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."— 2 Tim. i. 12.

The good apostle was now ready to change worlds, and the time of his departure was near at hand; soon he was to be publicly exposed to the scorn and cruelty of men; to the last assaults of the enemy of his soul; and to the sufferings of death. Yet none of these things moved him. He had found Christ, or rather Christ had found him, and when his spirit should stand before the tribunal of heaven, and all his sins of nature and of practice should be exhibited, he felt assured that the Lord who would judge him was the same who had already redeemed and purchased his soul by his own most precious blood. He was about to stand at the gates of the new Jerusalem, into which nothing can enter that defileth; and although he had been conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity, yet he knew the Lord could, and he was fully confident that he would, purify and make him meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. Thus in the prospect of sufferings, of death, and of judgment, his soul was in peace. Oh, that I may enter my sick chamber for the last time, and lay my head on a dying pillow in just this frame of mind, in just this strength of faith and fervour of hope. Lord, as thy grace is the same, thy love the same, thy mercy the same now, as it was then, so let it be unto me even as it was unto this thy servant, for Jesus Christ's sake.

JANUARY 29.

"As a little child relies
On a care beyond its own;
Knows he's neither strong nor wise,
Fears to stir a step alone:
Let me thus with thee abide,
As my father, guard, and guide."

YES, O Lord, I would thus desire, in all simplicity and godly sincerity, to repose on thee, whether I am looking to pass through the night or through the day; whether I am about to engage in duties abroad, or in duties at home. Never was poor little child less capable of providing for its own many wants, or of guiding and guarding its own steps through the day of its infantile pilgrimage, than I am of guiding and guarding my steps through that host of mental, moral, physical, and spiritual evils that surround me; and through which I must pass in my way to thine own kingdom. Lord, I know, and at times I deeply feel this; and yet there are seasons when thou seest it necessary to resist me with thy loving corrections; for, alas! there are times when these convictions cease to operate as they should do, and then this heart becomes trifling, thoughtless, and vain; yea, self-confident and proud. At these unhappy seasons it would, like a wayward little child, fain try to go alone, and put aside that hand which is mercifully and graciously held out for its direction and assistance. Oh, forgive these sins and follies; and henceforth let me hold, every day, more firmly by thee, under a deepening conviction that my own strength is but perfect weakness, and all my own wisdom but utter folly. Oh, "Thou, that resisteth the proud and giveth grace unto the humble," keep me at thy footstool in all humility and lowliness of mind, for Jesus Christ my Redeemer's sake. Amen.

JANUARY 30.

"Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory."
John xvii. 24.

THE beholding of this glory would be a new thing in heaven! or rather it would be a new and hitherto unseen glory in that happy world. The Lord Jesus Christ, on his return to his blessed Father, would assume a new and an additional aspect, and stand forth in a glory never before exhibited to angels or men. Whatever may have been the peculiar and diversified glories of the Son of God before he became man, and suffered, and died for human redemption, there was to be a great and wonderful addition made to these glories on his leaving our world and resuming his seat above. His former glory was that which arose out of his being the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person; and also that "by him all things were created that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; and in that all things were created by him, and for him; and in that he was before all things, and that by him all things had consisted, did consist, and would consist." When, however, he had finished the work which his Father gave him to do, he would carry into heaven with him the addition of a glorified human nature, robed in the splendour, and adorned with the glory and dignity of the Godhead. Thenceforth, as God and man in one Christ, he would be seen, adored, and loved by all the holy intelligences of that boundless empire. Even so—Amen and amen.

JANUARY 31.

"*Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory.*"
John xvii. 24.

GOD is *Love* or *Benevolence* in the fullest and most emphatic sense of the word; and to increase and establish our confidence in him as such, he has taught us to conceive of him as actuated by feelings and sympathies like those possessed by a renewed and gracious child of Adam. Now, it is the inseparable nature of *love* and *benevolence* to be exercised in imparting and diffusing happiness to others. Hence, a truly benevolent heart would sicken and die, even while surrounded by all the beauties of nature, and all the abundant possessions of providence, were it doomed to be alone. When there are those at hand who are near and dear to us, to look where we look, and to admire what we admire, the landscape is a thousand times more lovely and interesting, and the banquet is enjoyed with a tenfold greater relish by ourselves. And here we are actually assured that the infinite love, the boundless, endless benevolence of Christ Jesus himself would be less complete, less perfect, were not his redeemed children, his ransomed family, gathered around his throne in heaven to behold what he beholds, and to enjoy what he enjoys!

"Oh, love unequalled! mystery immense!"

But such was the behest of the Son of God on the eve of his sufferings and death! and the day is hastening on when the experience of it shall be proved in every blood-bought, ransomed sinner's joy unspeakable and full of glory!

FEBRUARY 1.

"*And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.*"—Gen. vi. 17, 18.

O HAPPY, highly favoured Noah! Thou hadst no cause of fear or of lamentation, except it were on account of others. It was an unheard of, a most awful judgment that was about to be poured down in justice on a guilty world: but thou wast exempt, thou hadst found favour in the sight of the Lord, and thou wouldst be safe and happy in the promised and provided ark; for the omnipotence and never-failing mercies of a covenant God would shut thee in, and give thee peace. Thus, O Lord, let it be unto thy servant, and unto all who are near and dear to him. There is another universal flood coming, not of waters to overflow the world, but of fire to consume it for its multiplied transgressions; and great, inconceivably great, will be the terrors of that day to all who have not an ark to fly to! Compassionate Lord God, may I find grace with thee, as Noah did. House and shelter me, not in an ark of gopher wood for a season, but in Christ Jesus, and in his salvation for ever. If at death and at judgment I am found in him, what shall I have to fear? the very waves that destroyed others served to bear up the ark in which Noah rested; and the fiery wrath that shall dissolve the element, and burn up the adversary, shall only send me into that heaven of heavens which thou hast prepared for them that love thee. Lord Jesus, be thou my portion, and then, come what will, I shall not be moved.

FEBRUARY 2.

"*Behold, I show you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.*"—1 Cor. xv. 51, 52.

The term "*sleep*" is here, as in many other places, used for "*natural death.*" At the end of the world the earth will not only have its sepulchres all filled with countless myriads of sleeping, or mouldering bodies, but millions of living, busy, anxious tribes will be occupying every country and district beneath the sun. These vast multitudes, elsewhere called the "*quick*," will have no time to die in the usual way, and to be buried, and, like the former generations, to see corruption; nor is this process necessary; for the same power that quickens, changes and raises every mouldering and entombed body from its resting-place, will, in an instant, at the sound of the last trumpet, arrest and change every such living reasonable being from corruptible to incorruptible, from a mortal to an immortal member of the great family of man. "The trumpet shall sound, and they shall be changed." Yes, and the sound of that trump will also arrest the world in its course, blot out the light of the sun and of the moon, and wind up every man's account, just as it then stands, whether it has been good, or whether it has been evil! O, my God and Saviour, in that day, grant that I may come forth to proclaim thee as *my* atoning, sin-pardoning, and all-sufficient portion, in whom I have redemption through thy once-shed precious blood, and with whom I shall dwell for ever.

FEBRUARY 3.

"*In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound; and we shall be changed.*"
1 Cor. xv. 52.

Ah! poor, guilty, unbelieving world, this most awfully solemn event will come at an hour when thou thinkest not, and at a time when thou art not aware!

"In customed glory bright, that morn, the sun
Will rise upon the earth with light, and heat,
And joy; seeming as full of youth, and strong
To mount the steep of heaven, as when the stars
Of morning sung to the first dawn, and night
Fled from his face. ——
No sign of change. All nature moving on
In wonted harmony. Men as they meet
Will praise the day; and talk of common things.
No sign of change appears: to every man
That day seems as the past. ——
When suddenly, alas, fair earth! the sun
Is wrapped in darkness, and his beams return
Up to the throne of God, and over all
The earth comes night, moonless and starless night."

All this, and much more than this, will be realized on that day. And now, poor Christ-despising sinner, what wilt thou do? What will now become of thy impious and affected courage, that once set heaven at nought, and blasphemed its Maker?

"Now a deadly paleness sits
On every face of such, and every heart
Grows chill, and every knee his fellow smites.
None speaks, none stir, none weep; for horror holds
All motionless, and fetters every tongue."

Such we may conceive to be the first movements of the Almighty; and such the state of mankind during the momentary interval before the trumpet sounds, and all are changed! Lord, this will be the day of thy glory, and the day of thy saints' full redemption. Oh, may it thus be mine through the merits of thy beloved Son.

FEBRUARY 4.

"*In the six hundreth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.*"—Gen. vii. 11, 23.

And then was seen the wisdom of obeying the Lord's voice, and the folly and madness of disregarding the oft-repeated threatenings and warnings of the preacher Noah. O, what a contrast was now visible between the state of things within the ark and of those without its sides! *Within that refuge* all was safety, comfort, and peace. *Without it* all was anguish, despair, and destruction. Within the ark were heard sounds of praise and songs of gladness, for the peace of God reigned and ruled in their hearts. Without the ark were heard the roarings of the thunder, mingled with the shrieks of drowning men, and the moans of expiring cattle. While Noah and his little family sat and conversed of the mercies of God, and felt that he loved them, the earth was literally rending to pieces; and continents and oceans were changing places; and death was sounding its knell over an expiring world! O, Lord God of Hosts! I know that thou hast appointed another day more awful than even this was—a day when thou wilt end the reign of sin for ever on this earth, and save thy children for ever in the ark, Christ; and cast all thine enemies beneath thy feet. O grant me in that most solemn, most joyous, and most dreadful day to find, that as Noah had all safety within the ark, I may have not only safety, but joy unspeakable and full of glory, through the most precious blood and merits of the Lord Jesus Christ.

FEBRUARY 5.

"*And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth.*"—Rev. xxi. 27.

This is one of those peculiarities that make heaven so desirable to the regenerate soul. This world, wherein the Christian is a sojourner, "lieth altogether in wickedness"—but that world, whither his hopes and his steps are leading him, is purity itself, as well as, in every other respect, perfection! Here, there is ever something, either within or round about us, that sadly defiles our very best thoughts and desires; something that mixes with, that adulterates and defiles our very best performances. Every fruit and motion of the spirit is assailed by some counter motion or fruit of the flesh, by something that the enemy presents to the mind, or by something that the world holds up to the eye, or speaks in the ear. All the gifts of our heavenly Father's providence, nay, all the bestowments of his grace, are objects for sin to attack. Our affections for lawful objects are polluted with idolatry. If we possess a small portion of wisdom it becomes the object for pride to assail. If we escape the flagrant sins of some about us, we are tempted to praise and extol ourselves. If we have more strength of mind, or of body, or less of natural infirmities and natural blemishes than our neighbour, we are sure to be tempted to vanity. In one word, all we are, and all we do is defiled. O, blessed world where all this is for ever excluded! Where there is not one single thought, or desire, or word, or work but is exactly what the Lord would have it; exactly what he loves, and delights to find in his pure, his perfect, and glorified children.

FEBRUARY 6.

" *Whate'er thy providence denies,*
I calmly would resign,
For thou art just, and good, and wise,
O bend my will to thine."

WERE our souls steadily fixed in this frame, life, with all its ruffling and trying circumstances, would pass very smoothly over our heads. But, alas! the carnal heart is enmity against God; and so long as any portion of that carnality remains unsubdued, so long and so far will our desires, our dispositions, and our will run counter to the will of him who is infinitely wise, and holy, and just, and good. Through our blindness and ignorance we are utterly unfitted for, and disabled from knowing what events, or what train of circumstances would be most conducive to our best, eternal interests. On the other hand, he who chooses the lot, and appoints the bounds of his people's habitation is infinite in wisdom, and consequently cannot err. He is also infinite in tender mercy, in compassion, and love; and hence it is impossible that he can overlook or disregard our trials, our infirmities, our pains, our sorrows, or sufferings. No, he sees and knows them altogether, and will regulate them to our strength, and our strength to them. Nay, he will actually convert them into blessings. Oh, that his grace may every day supply us with a large, an increasing portion of humility of spirit, of child-like submission, and of strong faith and confidence in his wisdom, mercy, and love; that so, under every new and every weighty trial, I may hear him say, " Fear not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God." " What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

FEBRUARY 7.

"*And it came to pass at the end of forty days, that Noah opened the windows of the ark which he had made: and he sent forth a raven, which went forth to and fro, until the waters were dried up from off the earth. Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; but the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him in the ark.*"—Gen. viii. 6—9.

Over and above the other purposes which the ark was to answer, it was designed to be a type of Christ, in whom alone the soul can find deliverance from the wrath to come. Nor were these two birds without a typical meaning. The raven was emblematical of a carnal, worldly, unrenewed heart. As a fowl of the air, the raven is an unclean bird; it is foul in its habits, its smell, its food, and its taste. Putridity is its delightful perfume and luxury; and it will scent it out and gorge on it wherever it is to be found. On the occasion narrated above, it would undoubtedly find some portions of floating carcases on which it would be able to settle and feed to its full. But not so the dove; this was a clean bird, and would neither soil its feet nor its feathers by standing on a putrid body, nor endure the smell, nor taste the flesh of so foul a thing. It would actually famish and die on any clean, though barren spot of ground, as a matter of choice to the other. And in all this it was emblematical of a regenerate heart.

The ark had no charms for the raven; and the world, as it then was, had none for the dove. Hence, while the former continued going hither and thither, and finding its unclean desires gratified by putrid food, the latter returned into the ark. Thus, O Lord, thus let it ever be with my soul. Let me find no rest to my spirit away from Christ Jesus, the ark of my soul and the author of my salvation.

FEBRUARY 8.

"*The path of sorrow, and that path alone,*
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown;
No traveller ever reached that blest abode,
Who found not thorns and briers in his road."

THUS wrote and thus felt the amiable, the pious, but spirit-smitten *Cowper*, the once afflicted bard of Olney, but now the happy chorister of heaven. No doubt but his sorrow-afflicted mind at times drew the picture too gloomy; but, as a general fact, it must be true; for one who could not err hath said, concerning his disciples, "In the world ye shall have tribulation."* Some heaven-bound travellers do undoubtedly find more thorns and sharper briers bestrewing their path than others; yet, after all, the word of inspiration declares, "that many are the afflictions of the righteous." If it be asked, why is it so? why the Lord has thus arranged his dispensations as to send or permit many trials to his children? we may find a correct reply in the same poet's lines, where he says,

"That he, who knew what human hearts would prove,
How slow to learn the dictates of his love,
That, hard by nature, and of stubborn will,
A life of ease would make them harder still,
In pity to the souls his grace designed
To rescue from the ruins of mankind,
Called for a cloud to darken ALL their years,
And said, 'Go spend them in a vale of tears.'"

The only alteration I would make is the substitution of the word *half* for the *all* of the poet. For no doubt that proportion is found in most christian men's experience. And oh, my ever gracious God, if it seem good to thee thus to deal with thy servant, give me grace to believe that this is altogether the best and most fitting lot, seeing that it is thy choice, and that thou hast chosen it for me in love, in wisdom, and mercy.

* John xvi. 33.

FEBRUARY 9.

"*Ye now, therefore, have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.*" John xvi. 22.

Our Lord well knew the amount of sorrow that then oppressed the disciples in the prospect of soon losing his presence, and familiar instructions; and he also knew the sum total of all the trials, afflictions, and sorrows each would have to encounter in this evil world. Nor would he change or do away this order of his wise dispensations of providence to exempt them from these afflictions; but he would ever have an eye on them for good—he would ever impart the grace and strength necessary to meet them, and, by and by, "he would see them again, and their heart should rejoice, and their joy no man should take from them." This was partly verified when he occasionally appeared to them after his resurrection, and also after he had returned to heaven, and from time to time poured down on them the comforting influences of the Holy Ghost. But it remained for them to be faithful unto death, and to be absent from the body before they would fully realize this gladness of heart, and this everlasting and uninterrupted joy here promised. Happy disciples! long ago have ye entered on these promised joys of your Lord. And all the eighteen hundred years that have passed over your heads have only served to augment them; every hour they have been joys unspeakable and full of glory, and such they will ever continue to be! O, my blessed Lord! if thou shalt hereafter permit me to share in those joys of thy heavenly kingdom, my soul will praise and adore thee, not only for every consolation, but for every sorrow thou didst allot me in my way thither.

FEBRUARY 10.

"I will bring the blind by a way that they know not; I will lead them by paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them."
Isa. xlii. 16.

How beautifully descriptive is this of a work of saving grace on a poor sinner's soul! Whatever wisdom or light in arts and sciences the natural man may possess, and however extensive or correct his knowledge may be in respect to worldly matters, he is still blind, and ignorant, and out of the way as to the things that make for his everlasting peace. The way of saving truth he knows not. To inculcate this wisdom is the work of God the Holy Ghost. Gracious Lord, I feel myself to be very weakness itself! Oh, wilt thou lead and uphold me by thine almighty power? I feel myself every day surrounded by perplexing providences and crooked events, and should I live yet a little longer, every day will but find me encompassed with the same difficulties! Lead me then according to thine own choice, and conduct me through such circumstances as will most glorify thy name and ripen my soul for heaven. Let every difficulty be removed, and every dark providence be cleared up, and every event be overruled and sanctified to the establishing of my soul in faith and love. Stand by me, O Lord, in every change; be with me spiritually and temporally in all things. O, never for one moment leave me to myself. Never, under any circumstance, forsake me; for shouldest thou withdraw thy presence and support, I must perish, and that without remedy.

FEBRUARY 11.

" 'Tis I appoint thy daily lot,
And I do all things well;
Soon shalt thou quit this gloomy scene,
And rise with me to dwell.

" In life my grace shall strength supply,
Proportioned to thy day,
In death thou still shalt find me nigh
To wipe thy tears away."

LORD, this is enough! Can I believe this and continue to complain as though some strange thing had happened unto me? Shall I dare to set my wisdom and discernment in opposition to thine? Is it for man—is it for me to presume to dictate, to say what is best to be done? what is most fitting for thee to do? Can I, who am but of yesterday, and, concerning the future, know nothing, can I mark out a wiser, a safer, a better path to tread than that which thou hast drawn out and appointed for me? Oh the folly and sinfulness of a fretful, murmuring, discontented spirit! What if the way be rough and the sky overcast? and what, though storm threatens to succeed to storm, yet these things last not for ever, and even while they do continue they come not alone. There never happened any real trial to a praying soul but what had more or less of visible mercies sent with it. Meanwhile, we are sure that these afflictions are shortening every hour, and that their end is not far off. Comparatively speaking, "They are but for a moment," and then comes eternal joy! In heaven all these things are, shall I say, forgotten? no, they are remembered as things gone by, and never to return; and this remembrance serves greatly to heighten and endear that rest, that grace, that glory which the happy soul inherits in a kingdom where Jesus makes all things new.

FEBRUARY 12.

" *That man no guard or weapon needs,*
Whose heart the blood of Jesus knows;
But safe may pass, if duty leads,
Through burning sands, or mountain snows."

" *Released from guilt, he feels no fear;*
Redemption is his shield and tower:
He sees his Saviour always near,
To help in every trying hour."

Thus it is that " the grace of God, which bringeth salvation," brings with it peace of mind under a thousand circumstances that otherwise would oppress the soul with fear and consternation. Lord, may I but be found where thy providence places me, and doing that which thou wouldest have me to do, and then I shall be safe, come what will. While it is our duty to use all scriptural means for the safety of our persons, for the protection of our health, and for the necessary provisions of food, of house, and raiment for the body, it is also our privilege, as believers in, and followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, to compose our minds as to what may happen to us in our respective paths of duty. We know not what a day, or an hour, may bring forth; nor is it necessary or desirable that we should look into the future, seeing that our Heavenly Father has assured us that all things shall work together for our good. What, then, have we to fear? Whereever his providence leads, he will be with us there for good—whatever we really need, that very thing he has promised to bestow. Surely, then,

" His love possessing, we are blest,
Secure, whatever change may come:
Whether we go to east or west,
With him we still shall be at home."

FEBRUARY 13.

"*Behold, God is my helper.*"—Psalm liv. 4.

On many occasions David could, and did make such declarations as this; and canst not thou, O my soul, take up the same words? Yes, there have been times of danger, and seasons of great perplexity—times of doubts and fears, of distress and sickness, and of threatening deaths, wherein the Lord was thy helper and deliverer. On many occasions he hath proved better than thy fears—many wherein he hath exceeded all thy hopes and expectations! And what should be the result of all these his gracious dealings and deliverances? first, undoubtedly, to raise thy heart, on every recollection of his past goodness, in songs of praise and thanksgiving; and next, to strengthen thy faith under every future trial, whatever it may be, and whenever it may come. Yes; like the Psalmist, thou oughtest to trust, and not to be afraid—to look forward, and calculate on coming afflictions; not to fly hither and thither in alarm, and take unscriptural means to escape them; but calmly to contemplate each of them as it is brought near thee, assured, like David, that "though thou shouldest walk in the midst of trouble, yet that the Lord would revive thee." This is the way to honour God, and to do good to thyself. Fears, and doubts, and murmurings, only dishonour thy adorable Lord, and bring darkness over the mind, and enfeeble the body. Why shouldest thou not sing, as many have done before thee,

"Tho' troubles assail,
And dangers affright,
Tho' friends should all fail,
And foes all unite;
Yet one thing secures us
Whatsoever betide,
The Scriptures assure us
The Lord will provide."

FEBRUARY 14.

"The beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places: How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war perished!"
2 Sam. i. 19, 27.

Such were the exclamations of the sweet singer of Israel, in his pathetic lamentation over the death of Saul and Jonathan; and there were many circumstances connected with that battle on Mount Gilboa which served to throw a deep and heart-distressing gloom over David's mind. And so it has ofttimes been in every country, when man has drawn the sword of war against his neighbour. The greatest heroes, the very foster-children of fame have fallen, and the mightiest and most enduring weapons of war have perished. Lord, hasten that day when the might of man shall consist in becoming, through thy strength, conqueror over the world, the flesh, and the devil: when the weapons that men shall wield shall be mighty ones, even the sword of the spirit, which thou hast ordained for subduing the power and reign of Satan, and for subjecting the whole earth to the obedience of thy will. Meanwhile be pleased, so long as I am on earth, to continue me in the ranks of thy christian soldiers, and every day do thou teach my hands to war, and my fingers to fight, in holy conflict for thy glory and for the good of my fellow-creatures; and in the end, let thy silent, but all-comforting Spirit, whisper to my soul,

"Servant of God, well done!
Rest from thy loved employ;
The battle fought, the victory won,
Enter thy Master's joy."

FEBRUARY 15.

"*And Jesus answered and said, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?*"—Mark x. 51.

My ever blessed Lord, may I not hope, yea, believe, that thou art putting the same question to me? And as an answer, I beseech thee that, ere long, my surviving christian friends may have to say with truth concerning my latter end,

"At midnight came the cry,
'To meet thy God prepare!'
He woke—and caught his captain's eye;
Then, strong in faith and prayer,
His spirit, with a bound,
Left its encumbering clay;
His tent, at sun-rise, on the ground,
A darkened ruin lay."

"The pains of death are past,
Labour and sorrow cease;
And life's long warfare closed at last,
His soul is found in peace.
Soldier of Christ, well done;
Praise be thy new employ;
And while eternal ages run,
Rest in thy Saviour's joy."

This, Lord, this is all that is really worth desiring. And with a cheerful and well-grounded hope that thus, through grace, it will be with thy servant, I would be quite unconcerned about all other matters. Only permit and enable me to live to thy glory, to die in thy praise, and to serve, to love, and adore thee for ever in heaven, as one whom Christ has redeemed with his most precious blood, and I ask no more.

FEBRUARY 16.

"*Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope.*"—Rom. xv. 4.

MAN is by nature a poor, blind, erring creature, as to all things spiritually good. He knows not God: he knows not himself. He is born like the wild ass's colt, perverse and unruly—a wanderer from the fold of God—a prodigal, who knows not, who values not, the privileges of his father's house. Such a man is truly an object of christian pity. We behold him exposed to a thousand evils and trials, and so long as he is thus a stranger to the consolations of the gospel, all his dangers, all his sorrows and sufferings, must go on widening and deepening every year. Under such circumstances, many an unhappy soul has cursed the hour wherein he was born. Consolation, instruction, hope, and pardon, and peace, are, however, written, as with a sun-beam, in the Holy Scriptures, so that he who neglects or despises them will justly perish, and that without remedy. Oh, my blessed Lord, grant that however other men may act, it may be my privilege and experience to go to thy word, and find all necessary directions and encouragement from this blessed source; for every age hath proved that

> "Here springs of consolation rise,
> To cheer the fainting mind;
> And thirsty souls receive supplies,
> And sweet refreshment find."

Yes, generation after generation hath proved that,

> "When guilt and terror, pain and grief
> United, rend the heart;
> Here sinners meet divine relief,
> To cure the raging smart."

FEBRUARY 17.

"*A thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is passed, and as a watch in the night. Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they are as a sleep: in the morning they are like grass which groweth up. In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down and withereth.*"—Psalm xc. 4—6.

THUS hastens away life, and all earthly things, and they are gone! All is rapidly passing by, or leaving, or disappointing us.

"Throughout this universe of space
To nothing am I long allied,
For flight of time, and change of place;
My strongest, dearest bonds divide.

"Parents I had, but where are they?
Friends whom I knew, I know no more;
Companions once that cheered my way,
Have dropt behind or gone before.

It is impossible to reflect on these things "that *were*, and *are not*," without some feelings of sadness stealing into the heart. Yet, through grace, even these afflictive recollections may lead us onward with invigorated steps to that world of rest which remains for the people of God. Happy, thrice happy world! subject to no changes or impressions from the flight of time or lapse of years. The ties that there unite the spirits of just men made perfect are unbroken, uninterrupted, and everlasting ties. The peculiar character of that universe is, that it contains *a perpetuity of bliss*. It is a world where perfection is ever becoming more perfect, as the creature is ever growing up into a more complete likeness to Christ himself. Fly, then, ye swift-winged days and months, and bring me where I shall behold my Redeemer's face in glory, and be for ever with him, and with all I once loved in him while on earth.

FEBRUARY 18.

"*He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?*"
Rom. viii. 32.

And yet with such scriptures as these before us, and with all the past experience of the divine wisdom and goodness which have fallen to our lot, how frequently do we, through ignorance or unbelief, fall into new doubts and fears about the things of to-morrow! There is not one praying, Christ-seeking soul to be found, who is not ready to acknowledge that in times past the Lord has proved faithful; that he hath been better to them than all their fears; that he hath, on various occasions, greatly exceeded all they hoped or expected he would do for them, in lightening their burden, in directing their steps, in sending them help, and in supplying their wants. And yet we are continually failing, as to resting in a quiet, humble, happy, believing frame of mind, on his blessed and abundant promises for the future! Oh, how wearying, how unworthy is our conduct towards God, and how mercifully patient and forbearing is his towards us! Lord, from henceforth may we trust and not be afraid. Enable us, with an increasing faith, to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, as made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Let us have the peace-giving, soul-sanctifying witness in ourselves, that through grace we have passed from death unto life; and as to the supplies necessary for the body, may we be wise enough to leave them all with thee, who hast promised freely to give us all things. Grant this, O blessed God, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

FEBRUARY 19.

"*I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*"—Rom. viii. 38, 39.

THIS is about the perfection of faith, as it certainly is the triumph of faith. Oh, for such a strong, such a Christ-honouring, such a soul-invigorating faith as this is, for my own daily experience! But, alas! I am far from it. And when I look round, and inquire how it is with my neighbours, there is little, very little of it to be found among them. Knowledge of doctrines, and a profession of the gospel, are easily met with, but not this all-conquering grace of faith. On the contrary, many are the exclamations, "O that I had but more faith!" And how, and why is it that those who profess to have fled to Christ Jesus for redemption through his blood, and to his promises of the Holy Spirit for all grace to help in every time of need; how is it, I say, that with these there is so little of this soul-strengthening faith? It is principally because they are not more simply and sincerely devoted to Christ. It is because they are not sufficiently in earnest. Their affections are too much set on things below, and too little on things above. The heart is going after its covetousness, or after its creature idols, or after its fleshly indulgences. Ah, Lord, this will never lead to the possession of the light of thy countenance: this will never increase our faith, nor clear up our evidences of being in thy love. O, take such entire possession of my heart as to crucify it to the world and to every thing that would grieve thy Spirit.

FEBRUARY 20.

"*And Moses said unto Hobab, We are journeying unto the place of which the Lord said I will give it you: come thou with us, and we will do thee good: for the Lord hath spoken good concerning Israel.*"—Numbers x. 29.

HOBAB'S country was a poor barren land compared with Canaan; and what was still more against it, it was a land of ignorance and idolatry. Whereas the place to which Moses and his people were going was no less than the land of promise, the land of Canaan, where God had promised every blessing, temporal and spiritual. Friendship, humanity, and every feeling of charity and of love prompted Moses to urge on his kinsman to cast in his lot with those around him, and to go with them, and share in their rich inheritance. And has the Lord in mercy called us to seek that better country, that rest which remains for the people of God above? Then will it be our bounden duty to urge on every poor, careless, christless, and graceless Hobab within our reach to come with us; and no longer to rest satisfied, ignorant of experimental religion, of faith, of hope, of joy and peace in the Holy Ghost. Surely the Lord hath spoken good concerning his praying people. He has declared, "They shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of his hands." He will care for them, he will bear their burdens, and relieve their wants. He will heal their wounded consciences, pardon their sins, sanctify their souls, and never leave nor forsake them; he will meet them at the Jordan of death, and convey them safely through, and will bring them unto the mount of the Paradise of God.

FEBRUARY 21.

"*I remembered God, and was troubled.*"—Psalm lxxvii. 3.

And such must ever be the case when the heart is not right with God, when it is not sincerely on the Lord's side. But it will also be the case, even with the individual of an upright mind, if he looks at, if he thinks of God in any other light than as reconciled to sinners through the merits and death of his beloved Son.

Were I to meditate on God merely as an Almighty God, I must tremble at every recollection of his power; were I to think of him as every where present, and as seeing, and knowing all things, as well in my thoughts and desires, as in my words and actions, I must shudder at his scrutiny. Did I think of him only as the infinitely pure and holy God, I must wish to fly from him, as our first parents vainly attempted to do, when they saw themselves naked, and sought to hide themselves. Did I contemplate God only as the creator of all things, and as the judge of all men, who will one day bring to light every hidden thing of darkness, and make manifest the secrets and counsels of all hearts, I might reasonably wish I had never been born. *Out of Christ*, God is a consuming fire. And *in Christ* he is a reconciled father of mercies, and God of all consolation to every humble, praying, penitent, believing sinner! Lord, evermore give me grace to love thee for the inestimable gift of thy Son; in whom I am promised redemption through his most precious blood, even the forgiveness of all my sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified through faith in thee.

FEBRUARY 22.

"*Man being in honour abideth not.*"—Psalm xlix. 12

Often have I viewed the monuments of our warriors and statesmen in St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey; and as I called to mind what I had learned from history of some, and what I personally knew of others, whose remains lay entombed at my feet, I could not but sigh, and wish they had possessed a more truly distinguished lot. In how few instances of these great and mighty men could the christian friend or christian minister have stood by, and guided by the word of God as the rule of his judgment, and by matters of fact in these men's lives, have with propriety thus addressed them?

"Happy soul, thy days are ended,
All thy mourning days below:
Go, by angel-guards attended,
To the sight of Jesus go!
Waiting to receive thy spirit,
Lo, the Saviour stands above,
Shews the purchase of his merit,
Reaches out a crown of love."

And yet, where this is not the case, how vain are all the hopes and all the applause of men; I would, indeed, pay all honour to whomsoever it is due, but for myself, I cannot be satisfied without that honour which cometh from God. Lord, when I am about to depart, let me hear thy voice, the inward witness of thy Spirit, say to me,

"Struggle through thy latest passion
To thy dear Redeemer's breast,
To his uttermost salvation
To his everlasting rest:
For the joy he sets before thee,
Bear a momentary pain,
Die, to live the life of glory,
Suffer with thy Lord to reign."

FEBRUARY 23.

" God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ."—1 Thess. v. 9.

How ready is the heart, in every hour of dejection, to lose sight of this blessed truth! and under every dark cloud that crosses the mind, to reverse this gracious declaration of heaven. How frequently will the great enemy of souls suggest, that God has not appointed us to the obtaining of salvation, but, on the contrary, that he has appointed us unto wrath. And the strange way in which some men state their views of the gospel, no doubt, has led many a weak and timid mind into still deeper distress. O, my blessed God, thou thyself hast assured the world, that thou art long suffering, and not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance. (2 Peter iii. 9.) That thou hast no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his ways and live. (Ezek. xxxii. 11.) So far from appointing any man to inevitable wrath, thy beloved Son is declared to have tasted death for every man. (Heb. ii. 9.) And in accordance with these, and a multitude of similar declarations, thou hast closed the volume of thy revealed will by this most blessed proclamation: " The Spirit and the bride say, come. And let him that heareth say, come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely." (Rev. xxii. 17.) Here then, under every temptation to doubt or despond, let me rest my confidence. Thou hast not spared thy Son, thine only Son, but delivered him up for us all. (Rom. viii. 32.) Thou hast not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ. Glory be unto thee, O Lord, for this unspeakable mercy. May this be the subject of my praise—the theme of my song for ever and ever. Amen.

FEBRUARY 24.

"Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."—Psalm cxvi. 7.

WHAT an infinite mercy to be able, from time to time, to take up this language as the expression of our own experience. David was frequently and heavily tried by the ungracious conduct of his children, by the ungrateful behaviour of his subjects, and by the warfare of the flesh and the Spirit in his own heart. At times he speaks of his sorrows as "waves going over him," as "a man sinking in the mire and the clay," as "the sorrows of death, and as the pains of hell getting hold of him." Yet, from time to time, the Lord appeared for him; deliverance was sent; peace was restored; a renewed sense of the divine favour was imparted; and joy and gladness of heart succeeded to lamentations, and sorrow, and woe. On these occasions the love of God bore his spirit heavenward, and the praises of God filled his lips; and often would he break out, as in this Psalm, and say, "I love the Lord, because he hath heard the voice of my supplication. Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live." And looking back on the sorrows that lately afflicted and weighed him down, he would congratulate himself and say, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." And why should not every sincere, Christ-seeking soul often do the same? It is not all sadness of heart, and it ought not to be all complaining. Whatever gourd our blessed Lord removes from over our head, "he never takes away our all; himself he gives us still." Oh, for more submission, more faith, and more gratitude and love!

FEBRUARY 25.

"*Again he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them that are bidden, behold I have prepared my dinner; my oxen, and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage.*"—Matt. xxii. 4.

And thus is a gracious God still acting towards us. His rich, unmerited, and unbought mercy still provides a marriage-feast of gospel blessings; and in furnishing us with all necessary means of grace, and in sending his messengers, his ministering servants, to make known what he has provided, and to invite us to come and partake of his bounty without money, and without price, we are laid under inexpressible obligations. Nor is there a single blessing thus provided by Christ Jesus but what we so absolutely need, that without it we can never be happy on earth, or ever enter the kingdom of heaven. But what, it may be asked, are these things we so much need, and which are ready provided for all who desire and go for them? they are

> "A pardon seal'd with Jesus' blood,
> The favour and the peace of God:
> The seeing eye, the feeling sense,
> The trembling joys of penitence.
>
> "The godly fear, the pleasing smart,
> The meltings of a broken heart:
> The tears that tell our sins forgiven;
> The sigh that wafts our souls to heaven."

These rich blessings of experimental religion the Holy Spirit can alone produce and increase in the soul; and our heavenly Father is more ready to give that Holy Spirit than we are to ask it. Lord, draw me to thyself, increase my desires after thee, and daily replenish my soul out of the riches of thy fulness in Christ Jesus, and thy name shall have all the glory now and for ever.

FEBRUARY 26.

"*Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.*"—Psalm cxvi. 7.

The morning of many a day in the Christian's life commences, in a mental sense, with clouds and storms; and yet, before the sun goes down, these clouds have often passed away; these storms have ceased to rage, and peace again has possessed the soul. It was thus with the Psalmist; he had been, apparently, near destruction; his feet had well-nigh slipped; his eyes shed tears of bitterness; but, anon, the Lord heard the voice of his supplication, and was gracious and merciful, and delivered him out of all his troubles. Oh that it may thus be with thy servant, O Lord, and with all who desire and seek thy face. Whatever trials may break in, and for a season spoil us of rest and peace, grant that we may not inflict this calamity on ourselves by backsliding from thee, or by any course of known and allowed iniquity; and whensoever, by the suddenness of any temptation, we are taken off our guard and cast down, or whensoever, through the infirmities and pains of the body, our spirits are brought very low, do thou turn in mercy and lift us up, and again restore unto us the joys of thy salvation, and make us glad with the light of thy countenance. O enable us to say, "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee." And especially grant that, as our day of life is drawing to a close, every cloud that once shaded our path may entirely disappear, and that the bright shinings of the Sun of Righteousness may greatly refresh and rejoice our departing spirits as they quit a world of sin, and leave the corruptions and infirmities of the body for ever behind.

FEBRUARY 27.

" O for an overcoming faith,
To cheer my dying hours,
To triumph o'er the monster, death,
And all his dreadful powers.
" Joyful with all the strength I have,
My quiv'ring lips should sing,
' Where is thy boasted victory, grave?
And where the monster's sting?' "

A DYING HOUR! O, what unspeakable consequences are suspended on the events and circumstances of that hour? It is the hour which, in a manner, will absorb every past hour in itself. If the soul be then blessed with the consolations of the Holy Ghost, and crowned with that faith which lays hold of Christ Jesus and of his precious salvation as its own portion, it will forget all its past trials and afflictions, or look back on them as things that had never been; and if it comes to that hour without the comforts of the promised Spirit, and destitute of a self-appropriating faith in the Redeemer's sacrifice and intercession, then will all its past joys be utterly forgotten, or remembered only to increase the bitterness of its present anguish. O, thou indulgent and all-sufficient Saviour! stand by thy servant in this last, this most solemn trial, and whisper to my soul, " It is I, be not afraid ;" and then, although the poor body may have to contend with a little more of human sufferings, my spirit will be sustained in peace, if not blessed with joy unspeakable and full of glory. All earthly cares and concerns will then be gone, and all merely natural ties will be dissolved for ever; and as to those beloved friends, whom God has endeared to me in the ties of his grace, I shall leave these also willingly—yes, even concerning these,

" My trembling lips—if Christ be nigh,
When life's sad hours are few,
With joy shall say,—' Behold, I die,
But God shall be with you.' "

FEBRUARY 28.

"*Ye are come unto God, the Judge of all.*"—Heb. xii. 23.

In heaven God is visible in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ as he is not in any other way. The eternal Jehovah, considered as an abstract spiritual essence, must ever remain unseen, unapproachable, and inconceivable. But although no form or similitude appeared on Mount Sinai, yet there were awful and sublime tokens of his nearness; and so, in the heaven of heavens, the glory of the invisible God will shed its lustre throughout all its happy regions, and such communications of his nearness and approval will be made to all the inhabitants as will fill them with unutterable sensations of adoration, gratitude, and love. But whether the redeemed soul draws near this unspeakable glory, and hears a voice but beholds no similitude; or whether it draws near to God as he is seen visibly in the Son of his love, such happy soul will be filled with rapture and delight utterly unknown to all beings and creatures but those who have experienced it themselves. Blessed Lord, grant that every dispensation of thy providence, and every event connected with my present existence, may fit and form my soul for appearing before thee in thy kingdom. Oh, let me come to thee as my God and Father in Christ Jesus. Let me but gaze on him who was dead and is alive again, even on that God and Saviour who hath redeemed me by his precious blood. Oh, that thine infinite grace may permit me to stand where all thy goodness shall pass before an assembled world, and where every individual shall be filled with all the fulness of God, which he is capable of sustaining, for Jesus Christ my Redeemer's sake.

FEBRUARY 29.

"*Ye are come to the spirits of just men made perfect.*"
Heb. xii. 23.

THE heavenly world is a social universe, and God, reconciled in his dear Son, and visibly seen and approached in Christ Jesus, is the fountain, the author, and summit of all happiness: and it is in the privilege of thus beholding and drawing near to the God-man Mediator, Christ Jesus, and in hearing his voice, and in partaking of his smiles, and in ever doing his will, that redeemed sinners find their supreme delight. But we are taught that the enjoyments of heaven are diversified; they are those of praise to God, and they are those of mutual, social intercourse between spirit and spirit. But as to what posts they will be called on to fill; what especial duties to perform; how they will each add a particular portion of felicity to the general stock; and how they will each receive additional portions into their own souls from others; we cannot now speak expressly. This, however, is certain, that every service is a service of love; every duty an unspeakable delight, every employment is what the infinitely wise and gracious God has himself selected; and for the discharge of which every soul is peculiarly fitted to glorify Christ, and to accumulate more felicity to itself and to impart more to others than it could do in any other post, or than any other glorified spirit could do in that station. Were this not so, the arrangements of heaven would not be perfect. Lord, fit and prepare my soul for every thing that will be most for the glory of thy name, and then I must be increasingly and for ever happy.

MARCH 1.

"*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; then shall I know even as also I am known.*"—1 Corinth. xiii. 12.

Often have I endeavoured to form some idea of the full and literal accomplishment of this declaration of God's word—"To know even as also I am known!" To have such a clear, such an extensive knowledge of the Creator of all beings, and of all things that he has done and permitted, that in a manner it will be like his knowledge of me and of what I have been, am, and ever shall be! How wonderful must then be the range of my vision and the preceptions of my mind! How shall I then be fitted to hear and learn from angels what they know of the boundless extent of God's creation, and of the filling up of infinite space with worlds on worlds, and systems on systems, in endless diversity and unmeasured distance! These high and holy intelligences will be enabled to impart, and I shall be enabled to comprehend the nature, the extent, and the blessings of the mediatorial kingdom of Christ, and of his moral government over all the beings he has made, and all the worlds he has created; and how and where all things will be gathered together in Christ, whether they be things on earth or things in "the heavens;" how they themselves felt when called into an instant, a full, and perfect state of existence, and found themselves standing in the presence of the adorable, the all-gracious Lord Jehovah Jesus, as their creator and everlasting portion! and how they have been occupied, and how they have continued to advance into a nearer assimilation to the Godhead from thence even until now.

MARCH 2.

"*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; then shall I know even as also I am known.*"—1 Corinth. xiii. 12.

LORD, when my soul looks forward to the experience of this wonderful accession of knowledge concerning thyself, and what thou hast done and permitted in heaven, and on earth, and in all parts of thy boundless dominion, it is in the humble hope and expectation that I shall thereby be fitted and enabled to glorify Thee in and through all I am to learn, and all I am to behold. Angels that conduct ransomed mortals into their own ranks above, will be able to relate all the, at present, mysterious transactions of the revolt of a portion of their companions in heaven. How Satan rose in arms; and why he rebelled: and what the loyal portion of the servants of God saw and heard, when hell was called into existence, and the condemned rebel-angels were cast down into its prison house; and how the sons of God shouted for joy when first our world was called into order and beauty, and man was created out of the dust of the earth; and having received the breath of the Almighty, he became a happy and an immortal soul. Yes, and these our first parents will be able to relate a hundred things of which we are now ignorant concerning their primitive state of innocence, and all the melancholy steps by which they fell into sin; and all the subsequent events that marked their departure from that happy residence, and followed them through all their days of sorrow and suffering, as tenants of a world blighted and scathed for their transgressions.

MARCH 3.

"*For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; then shall I know even as also I am known.*"—1 Corinth. xiii. 12.

YES, for I shall go to an innumerable company of angels, who will freely impart all they know. They will give me the most clear and perfect conceptions of the state of the church of Christ in the antediluvian world; and how the sons of God were drawn aside by the daughters of men. From these as from so many eye witnesses, I shall learn the particulars of the world's apostacy, its violence, and its final destruction by the flood. I shall learn concerning all the displays of divine goodness, and of man's ingratitude and rebellion, since the bow was set in the cloud, and God sent forth the children of Noah to replenish the earth; and above all I shall learn such things as on earth were never known, concerning the incarnation, the suffering, and death of the Lord Jesus Christ; how those awful scenes transacted in Gethsemane, and in Pilate's hall, and on Calvary, affected other worlds; and what were the sensations and feelings of the angelic hosts, when He who created them hung as an agonized expiring sacrifice for sin; and under the weight of his accumulated sufferings exclaimed, "Eli, Eli; lama sabachthani." Yes, I must hear the account of these things before I can feel as ye feel, and wonder as ye wonder, and love as ye love. True, I have the scripture-account to go to, but alas, I read and see as through a glass, darkly: I want to behold, as it were, face to face. I want to know even as I also am known. Lord Jesus, expand the powers of my soul to comprehend, with glorified saints and angels above, more of that love which passeth knowledge. Oh, fill me with all the communicable fulness of God.

MARCH 4.

"*The hope of the Gospel.*"—Coloss. i. 23.

This hope differs from all other, in that it is implanted, continued, and perfected by the Holy Ghost. It is the fruit of the Spirit—it comes from heaven—it fastens on divine objects as its principal exercise and delight; and, finally, it has its fruition in the kingdom of God and of the Lamb! It is the grand cordial to cheer the pilgrim on his way, to support him under trials and afflictions, and to light up his soul as the shadows of death thicken around the body. In the hope of the gospel is included the pardon of sin—the renewal of the heart—free access to God in prayer—adoption into the family of heaven—peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ—and faith that purifies the heart, works by love, and overcomes the world. It looks to an eternity of bliss with angels, and archangels, and with all the spirits of just men who are made perfect. It looks to the enjoyment of all the purity, intelligence, love, light, and glory inherited by those who dwell in the presence of God and ever rejoice in his love. And now, O my heavenly Father, wilt thou daily enlarge my soul with this hope? O, grant me to experience more and more of all these inestimable mercies and blessings which constitute this hope. Then shall I be happy under every circumstance, and be prepared for every event. Time may pass away—the earth may vanish from the firmament, the sun may be extinguished—the judgment of the great day may be arrived; and all its untold solemnities may be passing around me; yet shall I be safe and happy, and thy name will be for ever glorified through Jesus Christ.

MARCH 5.

"*If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel.*"—Coloss. i. 23.

We have seen that this hope of the Gospel includes within itself the pardon of sin, the renewal of the heart, free access to God in prayer, adoption into the family of heaven, peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, and faith that purifies the heart, works by love, and overcomes the world. And is there danger of any soul being moved away from the hope, from the pursuits, and from the love of these blessings? Yes, there is great danger! Can any thing in existence make up for their loss? Certainly not; they are beyond all exchange and all price! Yet millions give them up! The vain imaginations of men, the pride, the vanity, and sinful way of the world, or the lusts of the flesh, or the desire of riches, or the stratagems of satan, draw off multitudes, and their immortal spirits are shipwrecked, with the port of heaven, as it were, open to their shelter and reception, and the servant of God, meanwhile, urging them to flee from the wrath to come! Most gracious Lord God, do thou hold my soul continually in the hollow of thine hand; and suffer nothing to rob me of my promised crown. Without some experience of the hope of the Gospel resting in my own heart, I cannot be happy, though blessed with health, and friends, and every comfort—and with this hope as my portion, found and felt in my soul, I can smile at every present calamity, and look at all the solemnities of the last hour of the evening of my earthly day with peace and joy.

MARCH 6.

"*After this I beheld, and, lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; and cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, who sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.*"—Rev. vii. 9, 10.

THE giving utterance to the overflowing joys of the soul seems to be almost a constant circumstance among the redeemed in heaven. Not that they are exclusively occupied in acts of public praise, but certainly they are never otherwise than *filled* with intense gratitude and love unto Him who hath redeemed them to God by his blood. Yet, methinks, when my soul leaves this poor vile body, and returns unto Him who gave it, I would not, as a matter of choice, be introduced all at once into the ranks of the joyous praising and singing tribes; but I would rather lie prostrate at the feet of Jesus for one hour, absorbed in silent meditation, unspoken to, and undisturbed by a single glorified spirit around me. *There* I would lie, sunk and lost, as it were, in an unutterable sense of my Redeemer's love, and of my own unworthiness of the least mercy —I would even weep in heaven, before I partook of my cup of joy. Say not that tears become not the saints above. I feel that they would become me, and that it should be there I would shed the last, and have that last token of godly sorrow wiped away by the hand of Christ, while he raised me up and bid me enter into his own joy. It is not because Jesus has pardoned my sins that I am to pardon them also. No; I would, on my entrance into heaven, remember them, and this would increase the joys of my salvation.

MARCH 7.

"*I will sing of the mercies of the* LORD *for ever; with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.*"—Psalm lxxxix. 1.

THIS is and will literally be the case with all the redeemed children of God. Never will that stage arrive in the annals of eternity, when the mercies of the LORD will be forgotten, or when these mercies will cease to fill the soul with joy and love unspeakable, even in heaven. The Psalmist, with all the redeemed of old, have been calling on every succeeding generation, as they arrived there, to hear what the Lord had done, and was doing for their souls. And these also, in their turn, have been doing the same to others, and so it will continue, down to the end of time. And then, when the last happy troop of ransomed sinners shall have arrived, and no further generation shall ascend from earth, then shall the song be taken up in full chorus by all the general assembly, and one and all shall sing of the mercies of the Lord for ever and ever; and as the melody rolls on through the whole heaven of heavens, it shall gather strength, and communicate additional rapture to every rejoicing spirit, and God shall be eternally glorified through the Son of his love. Oh, my heavenly Father, wilt thou permit me to take some humble part in these services? Surely I have many and great mercies to praise thee for, not only in common with all thy children; but I have many that have never fallen to the lot of millions! Why then, O Lord, should not I lift up my voice in the great assembly, and sing of thy love? Why should I not call to those around me to hear of thy goodness to one of the most unworthy of thy creatures? Oh, yes, when the whole heavens are praising thy wonders, O LORD, I would also be declaring thy faithfulness in that blessed congregation of saints.

MARCH 8.

" There's nothing round this spacious earth
That suits my large desire;
To boundless joys and solid mirth
My nobler thoughts aspire.

" Where pleasure rolls its living flood,
From sin and dross refin'd,
Still springing from the throne of God,
And fit to cheer the mind."

NOTHING short of this can really satisfy a regenerate heart. As surely as that the Lord hath prepared a heaven for his redeemed children, so surely he does prepare them for that inheritance; not by implanting within them a morose, a peevish, discontented, or an ascetic disposition, but by imparting, by creating a spirituality of taste, a heavenly mindedness of character; so that things on earth, and things in heaven, henceforth appear to them in their own true form and real worth. Lord, may thy grace ever give me thus to compare and weigh temporal and eternal concerns in the balance of the sanctuary, to perceive the superiority of spiritual enjoyments to all that are carnal, and to esteem the smiles of Christ infinitely above all the applause of men, and all the riches of the universe. Why, O my soul, shouldest thou ever be satisfied with things that perish in the using, while there are those which endure for ever? Why grasp after shadows when the substance is before thee? O, the madness of the carnal heart! that willingly foregoes the search after a mansion and a crown of glory in heaven, to seek for the poor and dying things of this world! Lord, bring me where I shall meet with spirits of just men *made perfect*, and behold thee, my Redeemer, face to face, and be made like unto thee.

MARCH 9.

"The heart knoweth its own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermiddle with his joy."—Prov. xiv. 10.

In many things these words are strikingly descriptive of facts; but in nothing more so than in those conflicts of soul experienced by every real child of God. In the early stage of the visitations of that Spirit, whose work is to convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, a discovery is made of the deep-rooted enmity of the heart against God, of its transgression of the divine law by thought and word, of desire and deed, and of its actual state of condemnation by nature and by practice; and here begins that bitterness which, though untold to, unthought of by others, is keenly felt by the sin-stricken individual—a bitterness which defies all the cordials of vain man's prescription to soothe—and all the antidotes of the gay and giddy world to remove; a bitterness which defies all the bustle and excitement of business, and all the clamour of ambitious pursuits to overcome. All these may be brought forward or sought after to quiet the pain, and to neutralize the sorrows of the heart, but all will be in vain. It is God the Spirit who has smitten it; it is God alone who can bind it up. Nor is this the only season of the christian pilgrim's hidden sorrows; at times, even to the end of his journey, his heart is in great heaviness, through manifold trials and temptations; and often does he mourn in secret, and, amidst hopes and fears, exclaim, "O that I had the wings of a dove, then would I fly away and be at rest;" then would I escape from a body of sin and death; and leave a world of vanity and evil for ever behind.

MARCH 10.

"The heart knoweth its own bitterness; and a stranger doth not intermeddle with his joy."—Prov. xiv. 10.

"In this world," said Jesus, "ye shall have trouble; but in me ye shall have peace." Not peace at all times equally abundant, nor peace always continued without interruption. No; for that would be contrary to the whole tenor of holy writ, and to the actual experience of every servant of God. In that warfare between the flesh and the spirit, which is carried on in the bosom of every real christian soldier, there are sorrows and bitterness of heart unknown to the world, to the stranger, and often to the bosom friend. But, blessed be the Lord, there is "Peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—There is at times *joy* as well as peace in believing; there are seasons when the Lord Jehovah manifests himself to his people as he does not unto the world; there are times when the light of his countenance is so lifted up on the heaven-bound pilgrim, that the individual can exultingly say, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Saviour." But all this is what the world intermeddleth not with. Blessed God, rain down an increasing daily supply of this heavenly manna for my soul to feed on in this spiritually barren wilderness: reveal thyself to me more frequently—more abundantly—more preciously, as my portion, my Father, my friend, my exceeding and eternal great reward, reconciled to me in Christ Jesus; and then I shall be prepared to encounter whatever future trials, sorrows, and bitterness of heart may at times carry my soul into the house of mourning, and thy name shall have all the praise.

MARCH 11.

"*For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long suffering with joyfulness.*"—Coloss. i. 9—11.

WHAT an astonishing prayer is this! a prayer dictated by the Spirit of God, and consequently asking for nothing unnecessary, unattainable, improper, or contrary to the will of God. O, how seldom do we pray for such rich mercies, for such high and honourable fruits of the Spirit as these! "*To be filled with the knowledge of the divine will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, and to increase in the knowledge of God.*" O, how honourable would this be to God, and how profitable to our own souls, did we earnestly pray for, and obtain a large portion of these blessings! "This is life eternal," said our adorable Saviour, "to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." And shall we rest satisfied with a small portion of this mercy, when we are taught and encouraged to seek and expect a full measure? Lord, do thou greatly increase our hungering and thirsting after such blessings. Thou canst fill us to the full extent of our present capacities; and then thou canst enlarge these capacities, and again and again replenish them to the very full. O that thou wouldest do so, that we may ever continue to know thee more perfectly, to love thee more fervently, and to serve thee more acceptably in the faith and practice of the gospel, to thy honour and glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

MARCH 12.

"*That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing.*"
Coloss. i. 10.

How much does this request contain! Am I in affluence, then if I would walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, I must conduct myself with all gratitude and thankfulness to him; with all respect to my superiors in rank and office; with all courtesy to my equals; with all kindness and liberality to every class of my inferiors. Am I poor and needy, then I must exhibit a contented mind, unenvious of others who possess more, and mindful of those who possess less than myself. Am I reviled, then I must not revile again. Am I injured, I must forgive and pray for those who are my adversaries. Am I in health and good spirits, I must be of an active sober mind, ever at work for my Lord, and for my fellow-creatures, according to my abilities. Am I sickly, dispirited, and afflicted, I must show forth a spirit of meekness and resignation towards God, and of patience and gentleness towards those about me. In every change of life, and in every post I may be called to occupy, I must seek grace and wisdom from above, to walk in that very path as the Lord would have me to do; my desire and my daily aim must be to do the will of God *in all things*.

And wilt thou not, O Lord, give me grace to do so? Thou hast issued the command, that, "whether we eat, or drink, or whatsoever we do, we should do all to thy glory?" May the love of Christ so constrain, so animate my soul, that it may ever delight to run the way of thy commands, and in so doing find its best delight.

MARCH 13.

" Arise ye and depart ; for this is not your rest : because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sure destruction."
Micah ii. 10.

As the hours of every day carry us onward to its evening, and as every evening that, shut in with its twilight and darkness around us, conveys us one stage nearer to an eternal world, how should our hearts, our thoughts and desires be going forward to that rest which remains for the people of God? Many, very many reasons exist why we should be ever, as it were, on the wing for our flight. In the text before us these two are particularly urged. The present world is thus described : " it is polluted ; and it will destroy those who set up their rest in it." Yes, the Christian is now in a polluted world. For nearly six thousand years it has been a theatre on which every crime has been committed, every abomination transacted that man can commit, or fallen depraved hearts can put into practice. Up to this very hour there is no place of residence, no period in human life, no station among men, but is crowded with moral evil, arising out of the very nature of things ; every thing is disordered, polluted, and perverted from its original purpose and intention. It is a Christ-persecuting, a truth-hating, a sin-loving world. The basest selfishness is rooted in every fallen heart, and every such heart is enmity against God. The world lies in wickedness, and it has finally to perish in and for its sins. My God and Father in Christ Jesus, I bless thy holy name for giving me a desire to arise and depart in search of a better rest. O, bring me shortly to thine own pure, and happy, and holy kingdom, to behold and adore thee, ever and ever. Amen.

MARCH 14.

"Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest; because it is polluted, it shall destroy you, even with a sure destruction."
Micah ii. 10.

No; this sin-polluted and Christ-hating world is not the resting place of the children of God. Because they are not of the world, therefore the world hateth them. In no country under heaven has the real spiritually-minded follower of Christ yet found a resting place, an exemption from the frowns, the contempt, or persecution of mankind. Every system of idol-worship, of impure heathenism, of vile imposture, has had its day of honourable acceptance, and these still hold dominion over the many of the human race. But pure and undefiled religion, the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, has been scorned and rejected, and not unfrequently persecuted unto death. Such is the world, through which the child of God must pass; and in such a world he cannot, must not consider himself at home. No; he thanks God for all his daily comforts and mercies by the way, but he receives them as way-side mercies and comforts; not as inducements to set up his rest on this side of Jordan. His heart is at home, and his home is among the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven. True, when he looks round on the works of God, he sees in them much of beauty, much to wonder at, much to admire, but this only convinces him how much better it must be to find a resting place in the kingdom above, where every thing that can gratify and delight the soul will exist in such perfection as is suited to the immediate dwelling-place, not of angels and glorified saints merely, but of the Lord Jehovah himself.

MARCH 15.

"*Arise ye, and depart; for this is not your rest: because it is polluted, it will destroy you, even with a sure destruction.*"
Micah ii. 10.

When a man, through grace, hears and obeys this kind injunction of a heavenly Father, the world accounts and calls him a fool; but as the eyes of his understanding have been enlightened from above, he sees what is the hope of his calling, and can, in some degree, estimate the value of the glory of the riches of the saint's inheritance. From henceforth he goes on with his conversation, his heart and treasure in heaven He does not hate the world, but he pities and moans over it as Lot pitied and mourned over polluted and condemned Sodom and Gomorrah, while he himself fled towards Zoar. Yea, having within his own bosom some portion of the saving peace of God, through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and rejoicing in this evidence of his acceptance in the Beloved, he can truly pity the greatest princes on earth, who have fixed their hopes and rest in this devoted earth. He knows in whom he has believed, he trusts that he is adopted into the family of the Most High, and he looks forward to departing hence and going whither his Lord is already gone, and has prepared a place for him to be also; he meditates on, and often compares the company of that world to the inhabitants of this—the purity of heaven with the pollutions of earth; and he longs to be there. Blessed Lord, hasten my steps onward to thyself. Let my whole soul arise daily in more ardent longings after thy presence, where there is fulness of joy, and after the society of thy kingdom, where there are pleasures for evermore.

MARCH 16.

" Poor child of danger, nursling of the storm,
Sad are the woes that wreck thy manly form!
Rocks, waves, and winds, the shatter'd bark delay,
Thy heart is sad, thy home is far away."

THUS fares it with thousands that traverse the ocean; and thus it was once with myself.

" But hope did there her moonlight vigils keep,
And sung to charm the spirit of the deep;
My native hills that rose in happier climes,
The grot that heard my song of other times,
Rush'd on my thoughts———"

And while there remained a hope that these would again be visited, and that those who were dearest to me on earth would again see me and bless me, and that I should be with them, never to stray thus far any more—while these thoughts and hopes possessed the mind, the surrounding dangers, privations, and trials passed almost unheeded by. And yet these were nothing better than earthly hopes and earthly idols, that I then coveted. Holy and blessed Lord God, I am still a voyager; but I trust I am bound to a better country than any which this earth contains. I am a poor child of danger, and exposed to many a storm; but these are spiritual and more to be dreaded than all I encountered on the ocean in former days. My heart, too, is often sad; for many things retard my progress and delay me on the road; and heaven, my sweet, my longed for, my hoped for home is far away. Yet I am cheered and comforted at times with some brightening prospects of reaching that goodly land, and of seeing, and hearing, and ever being with my Lord, and with all those who have been nearer and dearest to me on earth; but from whom I have been long and widely separated. Blessed hope, " it will not make ashamed," for it is grounded on the unchangeable promises of God in Christ Jesus, and can never fail.

MARCH 17.

"*God is love; he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.*"—1 John iv. 16.

To dwell in love, as it has reference to God, is to live in that state of mind and under the influence of such feelings and desires as bring the Lord home to our heart, and as make him the grand object of our best, our most ardent affections. And this, in heaven, will arise from a sense and feeling of God's love and compassion to us individually, and also from an insight into and a deep and realizing sense of his manifold and boundless excellencies. To thus know the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, is not only a proof that we are among those who shall partake of life eternal with him in heaven; but it is the *very* source whence our enrapturing gratitude, admiration, and love take their rise. Such a being, so understood and contemplated, either by angels or by the spirits of just men made perfect, must impart sensations of reverence and love that are utterly inconceivable to souls encompassed with a body of flesh. But this is the very element of heaven; this is that state or frame of mind which ever pervades all the inhabitants of that world of love. God dwells in them; an inexpressible sense of his love to them is an abiding, an ever-enrapturing principle. Here on earth some faint impressions of this love are made by the Holy Ghost shedding abroad in our hearts a little experience of the divine mercy; but, alas! it is as nothing, as less than nothing and vanity, when compared to that which animates and fills the countless hosts who surround the throne of a God of love in heaven.

MARCH 18.

"*I would not live alway.*"—Job vii. 16.

No, my soul, there are many weighty reasons why thou shouldest prefer removing hence. Thy Lord himself enjoins thee to arise and depart; because this world is polluted and polluting. It is in open rebellion against its Maker. It neglects and despises thy Saviour, and thy Friend. It lies in wickedness. It is doomed to perish; and all who love it will perish with it. On the other hand, that world whither thou art desirous to go, is altogether devoted to God and to his Christ. It is wholly and entirely what the Lord would have it to be. In it there is *a fulness of joy*. There is no weariness of body, nor exhaustion, nor depression of spirits; no lukewarmness nor wandering, nor vain or sinful thoughts. No improper tempers, or forbidden desires. No idle or trifling behaviour, or word, or work. There will be no diminution in other's affections towards thee, and none in thine towards them. There are no errors, mistakes, or infirmities; no unwise or evil counsel; no flattery or falsehood; no concealment or duplicity. There is intense love, but no inordinate affection. There is pure, angelic, ever-increasing love, yet no creature idolatry. Every object is loved and enjoyed in its proper degree, and the Lord Jehovah, visible in the Lord Jesus Christ, is the fountain whence all the streams of happiness flow, and to which they all return. O, my poor heart, rouse thee and hasten onward; rest not, be not satisfied with any thing short of an abundant entrance into that world which God has prepared for them that love him. However sweet thy communion with him may sometimes be below, yet is this as nothing compared with heaven.

MARCH 19.

"*In my Father's house are many mansions: I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also.*"—John xiv. 2, 3.

NEVER can the thoughts of the heart of man conceive the blessed import of these words, until he beholds and partakes of them for himself! "*Many mansions*," that is, innumerable posts of honour, of happiness, and glory, to be filled up, possessed, and for ever enjoyed by the redeemed children of men. *A mansion* is a residence of splendour, an abode of magnificence, fitted up with every thing suited to the dignity and delight of the occupier. It is a place where friend meets friend, and where one enjoyment is expected to succeed another. But alas, happiness, after all, is rarely found beneath the roof of earthly mansions. And when something bearing its name is now and then apparent, it has so many drawbacks, so many admixtures, that it almost entirely loses its claim to happiness. Not so in the house of our Father in heaven—not so in the kingdom and city of the living God. There every mansion is so prepared as to suit its occupier better than any other in that happy world, and its duties and enjoyments are completely fitted to the state and faculties of the possessor. In that kingdom none but friends ever meet; and in its streets none ever pronounce that painful word, "adieu!" To crown the whole, every redeemed sinner stands in full view of the throne of God and the Lamb.

"O when, thou city of my God,
Shall I thy courts ascend;
Where congregations ne'er break up,
And Sabbaths have no end?"

MARCH 20.

"*Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost.*"—Rom. xv. 13.

FAITH in the merits and sacrifice of Christ Jesus, as being imputed to, and undergone for me, is the only safe and scriptural ground of joy and peace to my soul. And if any poor child of Adam is enabled to "abound in this hope," and in all its happy and blessed consequences, it will be because God the Holy Ghost has implanted that hope in his bosom. This hope "maketh not ashamed." The word of God is its rule, and the promises of God are its ground of assurance, and the things of God are principally the objects which engage its most ardent exercise. I have never read "Campbell's poem on the Pleasures of Hope" without a melancholy cast of mind. It is a beautiful description of all that merely self-formed, and self-supported hopes can do for man under trying circumstances. And no doubt but that this defective principle does, on various occasions, cheer the heart; but such a hope *cheers by beguiling*. It seldom has any substantial foundation. It is frequently most romantic and visionary; and alas, in its soberest character, it very, very often, "makes ashamed." Nor is this all; as it is mostly indulged on carnal, perishing things, its very essence is oft-times gone as soon as the thing hoped for is obtained. O, thou God of hope, let mine be hopes of thine own implanting, and thy salvation the centre of them all; then I would say,

"Cease, every joy, to glimmer on my mind,
But leave—oh leave, this light of hope behind!
What, though my winged hours of bliss have been,
Like angel-visits, few and far between,
Yet this shall more than every pang appease,
And charm—when pleasures lose the power to please."

MARCH 21.

"Thrice happy soul! by special grace
So highly favour'd here,
To sound in death the Saviour's praise,
And breathe the Comforter:
On earth t'enjoy the blissful sight
To dying Stephen given,
And see the Lord enthron'd in light,
And see the opening heaven."

THERE are a few happy souls who are thus exceedingly privileged in their last hours with unusual manifestations of the love of God their Saviour, who, even while in the flesh, have an abundant earnest or foretaste of that fulness of joy which awaits the soul when it shall be absent from the body, and present with the Lord. Blessed, happy, and enviable is such a dying experience; but it is not the common lot of all who die in Christ Jesus, and go to reign with him for ever. The Lord Jehovah is a Sovereign Lord, and he dispenses his unmerited favours as he sees fit, and in the proportions which his own good pleasure dictates. While all Christian men must undoubtedly wish for such a state to crown their latter end—and while all may, in a spirit of humility and submission, pray for it, yet it must be remembered, that such an experience is not necessary unto salvation. If Christ Jesus be formed in our heart as the hope of glory; if the soul longs to be like him on earth, and above all things desires to be with him in heaven; if men watch against and mourn over sin, and sigh, and hunger and thirst after conformity to the mind of Christ in all things, they will certainly behold his face with joy in heaven, and reign with him there for ever in glory, although their closing hours may be unconscious hours, or silent as to all triumphant rapturous joy.

MARCH 22.

"Amidst that bright ethereal train
We shall find our friends again,
Distinguish'd in the throng.
Our spirits shall their spirits know,
And sing with all we lov'd below,
The Lamb's eternal song."

THERE are some christian men who much doubt whether the above lines do really state a fact. For my own part, I have not one single doubt on the subject. I most deliberately and fully believe that there is a mutual recognition between glorified saints in the kingdom of God; and that every *christian* friendship formed on earth is, and will be perpetuated in heaven. Such also were the sentiments of the truly great and eminently pious *Baxter*. Writing on this subject, he says, "I must confess, as the experience of my own soul, that the expectation of loving my friends in heaven, principally kindles my love to them on earth. If I thought that I should never know them, and consequently never love them after this life is ended, I should in reason number them with temporal things, and love them as such. But I now delight in converse with my pious friends, in a firm persuasion that I shall converse with them for ever; and I take comfort in those of them that are dead or absent, as believing that I shall shortly meet them in heaven, and love them with a heavenly love, that shall there be perfected." As there is one fountain whence all happiness flows—one source whence it all originates, even the Lord Jesus Christ, visible among his ransomed children, so there are many streams which convey that happiness to the members of his glorified family; and that of renewed and perpetuated *christian* friendship is one; and for this I will praise the Lord for ever.

MARCH 23.

" Dark river of death, *thou art flowing*
Between the bright city *and me,*
Thou boundest the path I am going,
O, how shall I pass over thee?"

GLORY be to God, I am not now at a loss for an answer to this all-important inquiry. There was, however, a time when I daily expected my summons from heaven to pass these troubled waters, and again and again I asked my trembling soul, "how it would order its course." And, alas! such was the then blindness, such the ignorance of my mind, that I actually conceived I must pass that gloomy river in my own skill and good management. In other words, I had no better hope than that of being able to satisfy my Judge that I had not been quite so sinful as my surrounding companions. O, hadst thou then entered into judgment with me, where should I now have been? I must have been lost for ever, because I had never seen or felt the evil of my nature, nor ever scripturally repented of one sin, nor ever known the nature or the necessity of the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, or of the sanctification of the Holy Ghost. In such a state, the dark river of death would have carried my body to a rude, unconsecrated grave in a foreign land, and my soul to the nethermost hell, to the blackness of darkness for ever! Now, O Lord my God! I trust, that

" When the dark stormy waters rise o'er me,
And earth disappears from my sight,
When a cloud rises thickly before me,
And veils all my spirits in night,"

that I shall shout, " Victory, victory!" through the blood of the Lamb.

MARCH 24.

" O death! thou last portion of sorrow,
The prospect of heaven is bright;
And fair is the dawn of its morrow,
But stormy and painful thy night."

SUCH has been the experience of many of my dear departed friends and flock. And may I not pray, O Lord, that such may one day be my own? All those whose death-bed scenes now come to my remembrance were poor, unworthy sinners like myself. They stood self-condemned, and spiritually poor, and blind, and wretched, and miserable, and naked in their own eyes; and under such circumstances they cast their guilty souls on the promises and all-precious blood of Christ Jesus; and there they found pardon and peace. Having the witness that they loved the Redeemer, and that he loved them, they desired to depart and be with him, which was far better than tarrying here: and ever and anon, as the bright and cheering beams of the Holy Ghost the Comforter shone into the soul, they could smile at death, and inquire of those around them when they thought he would arrive! Blessed, blessed God! when I approach that day which is to be followed, as concerns the body, with the stormy and painful night of its dissolution, even of all that is mortal about me, may the bright prospect of a heaven to be possessed on the morrow so fill my soul with joy, so employ my heart and tongue in praise of redeeming love, that death may literally be swallowed up in a glorious foretaste of my inheritance among the saints in light. Yes, my gracious Lord, I beseech thee that then

" Sweet peace may shine cloudless above me,
As I think what my Saviour has said,
That the Father himself deigns to love me,
And Jesus has died in my stead!"

MARCH 25.

"Behold I make all things new."—Rev. xxi. 5.

NOTHING is so encouraging under present sorrows and afflictions as a prospect of these trials soon ending. Where there is a well grounded confidence that such will be the case, and that these sorrows will be turned into joy, no present calamity will crush the sufferer. On this account the Scriptures frequently bring forward the future lot of the saints; and contrasting the joys which remain to be revealed with the trials they are now groaning under, the people of Christ are enjoined to "comfort one another with these words." In this manner, also, do the Scriptures of truth wind up their solemn and delightful pages, by calling on us to take, as it were, a glimpse of the new Jerusalem, the unseen world; and among the many glorious things that are spoken of this city of God, the Lord Jesus himself has here declared this important fact for our unceasing encouragement and comfort, "Behold I make all things new." O blessed truth! how much is contained in these few words! Yes, to every redeemed child of Adam all things will shortly be made new as to that world whither they are going, and as to this which they leave behind. This world is a wilderness, and that is a Paradise. This is like a restless, troubled ocean; that is a sea of glass, calm and unruffled. In this world there are storms and evils of every name and nature. Changes, separations, and weariness; burning heats and chilling frosts, and pains, and tears, and poverty, with sorrows, afflictions, disappointments, and sundry kinds of death. But these are all done away, entirely and for ever removed, in yonder happy, heavenly world.

MARCH 26.

"*Behold I make all things new.*"—Rev. xxi. 5.

"I GO," said our blessed Lord, "I go to prepare a place for you." (John xiv. 2.) And the grand feature of that place is, that it is utterly unlike the present world from which they are to remove. No doubt but many and great mercies, many and great enjoyments, are thrown across the Christian's pathway even here. But amidst the most favoured and indulgent lot of man on earth, this world is, in itself, *a spiritual wilderness* of thorns and briers, of vanities, vexations, snares, and death. It is the same world that crucified the Son of God, and whose enmity is still as bitter against the Saviour and his people as ever. In its smiles and caresses the Christian will soon lose the presence and peace of God. And such is the baneful effect of its friendship and love, that he who sighs after and partakes of them will assuredly find his soul's destruction. Now, my soul, contemplate heaven as a world where not one of these evils can find entrance, and where every thing of an opposite blessing exists; where every high and holy, every just, and pure, and lovely principle exists, and unites soul to soul, and all to God; a world where every act, and every thought, and every desire is exactly such as Christ Jesus himself would put forth and feel were he in the individual's place; and consequently, where every movement of the affections and of the faculties of the soul are most highly approved, nay, intensely loved by him. O, how completely will then be realized this declaration of our Lord's. How inexpressibly happy will every redeemed sinner be in the experience of all things being thus made new! Gracious God, may I fully know it all, through Jesus Christ!

MARCH 27.

"*My meditation of him shall be sweet.*"—Psalm civ. 34.

THE exercise of the mind in meditating on the things, the ways, the works, and kingdom of God, is what lifts man so high in the scale of true dignity, and places him more than half way in advance between irrational creatures on earth and angels of light in heaven. Little, indeed, can we now learn or comprehend of him who is unsearchable, or of many of those his ways, because they are past our finding out. Yet, every step we do advance, guided by the light and information of holy writ, we find new wonders of wisdom, new wonders of love, and of grace and glory, to delight and animate the soul. But it will be in heaven that the exercise of meditation will be fully carried out, and all its harvest of rich blessings will be for ever gathering in. "What unknown and unrivalled beauties will then be discovered and contemplated, as contained in the attributes of the divine nature. What a supreme delight to lose ourselves among the boundless perfections of the self-sufficient and eternal Jehovah, to fathom still more and more of the unfathomable eternal existence, wisdom, power, and justice of the Lord Almighty." To grasp with our enlarged and purified conceptions, more and more of his holiness, his goodness, and truth! and to be able to comprehend that beauteous harmony which subsists between his justice and his mercy, his love to man and his abhorrence of man's transgressions. From every renewed exercise of such meditations the soul will rise filled with more of the likeness of God its Saviour, and feel an enlarged desire to serve, and find an enlarged power of glorifying him who sitteth on the throne, and of praising and worshipping the Lamb for ever and ever!

MARCH 28.

"This is life eternal, that they may know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent."—John xvii. 3.

"To know the Father and the Son according to the revelation which they have given of themselves in the gospel, is not only the *way* to obtain eternal life, and consequently the *business* of the saints below; but the knowledge of this Son and this Father in their natural glories, in their personal characters, in their sublime and mysterious relations to each other, and in their most amazing contrivances and transactions for the recovery of lost sinners, may be (yes, and ever will be) matter of the most pleasing enquiry, and delicious contemplation, to the angels themselves.

"We know something of God by the light of nature. The reason that is within us shines like a feeble lamp in a private room, and gives us some twinkling and uncertain notions of our Creator. The notices that we obtain by the light of grace, or the gospel here on earth, are far brighter and surer, like the moon at midnight shining on a dark world, or like the rise of the morning star, and the dawning of the day. But the knowledge which departed spirits obtain of their Creator and their Redeemer in the light of glory, is as far superior to that of nature and grace as the lustre of the meridian sun exceeds the pale moon-beams, or the glimmering twilight of the morning. O happy spirits that are thus divinely employed, and are entertaining themselves and their fellow spirits with those noble truths, and transporting wonders of nature and grace, and things heavenly, which are all mystery, entanglement, and confusion to our thoughts in the present state."—*(Watts.)*

MARCH 29.

"As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."—Psalm xvii. 15.

DEATH, that is, the death of the children of God, is frequently compared to, and called by, the name of sleep. And the arousing of the sleeping body to a state of renewed and enlarged consciousness is considered as emblematical of that great and sudden change experienced by the soul when it is first delivered from the dark prison of the body, and becomes sensible of ten thousand things, of which it knew nothing while it lay, as it were, slumbering, and comparatively mindless in the body. We all know that a person may fall into a sound sleep while travelling at the rate of many miles an hour, and that on his rousing from his slumbers he may find himself actually surrounded by objects such as he never looked on before, and such as he had never heard of. What pleasurable, what surprising sensations may thus in one minute fill his soul and enrapture his feelings! But how faintly, after all, does this illustrate the great awakening up of the spirit from its present state of slumbering existence, to behold all the hitherto unseen and unheard of things in an eternal world! Lord, as I lay me down to sleep this night, do thou sweetly compose my mind under a safe persuasion that, whether I awake up again to behold man upon the earth or not, I may, in either case, be found in Christ Jesus, prepared, through thy rich grace, for whatever may be thy will concerning me.

MARCH 30.

"*I shall be satisfied when I awake up in thy likeness.*"
Psalm xvii. 15.

The Psalmist had been musing on, and sorrowing over the many sins and infirmities, the imperfections and follies of his own heart, and on the imperfections, errors, and sins of mankind in general; and, alas, he found, as all thus employed must find, every thing to depress his spirits, and nothing to really satisfy the soul. One happy resource, however, was yet at hand. He had a good hope beyond the grave; and he knew enough of the value and nature of his future inheritance to cheer his mind, and to prompt this language of confidence and consolation: "As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: *I shall be satisfied when I awake up in thy likeness.*" Now, as this will also be the happy privilege of all who die in the Lord, it may be well to occasionally meditate on that likeness or similarity which in heaven is found to subsist between the Lord Jesus Christ and his redeemed and glorified children.

First, then, the ransomed sinner will there be, in a certain degree, like unto his Saviour in *holiness:* and who, that feels the plague of his own heart, would not barter away every thing on earth for sinless, angelic, God-like holiness in heaven? Each follower of Christ Jesus may now, with truth and with tears, exclaim,

> "When to the throne of grace I flee,
> *Sin* stands between my God and me;
> Where'er I rove, where'er I rest,
> I feel him working in my breast."

MARCH 31.

" I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness."
Psalm xvii. 15.

WHAT a contrast will this state be to the present one! Here sin is ever at hand, and finds more or less entrance into every place, and into every performance. In public and in private, in acts of devotion, in reading, in hearing, and in working for God, and for his cause and people, we find the adversary is both without us and within us. There is not one station in society—not one stage in human life—not one condition in all the world, but is exposed to sins peculiar to that very state, as well as to many that are common to all others. Each and all have their snares and dangers, which, more or less, defile the soul, expose it to renewed perils, and require the daily pardoning mercy of God the Saviour, and the daily cleansing of God the Holy Ghost. But when the soul awakes up in the Redeemer's likeness, there will be no cause of complaint, for every imperfection will then have been corrected; every atom of a sinful, irregular, carnal nature done away. Thither entereth nothing that defileth, nor any thing that retains defilement in the smallest possible degree; but where, as was lately observed,* every thought and desire, every word and work, every movement of the mind, every aim and tendency of the soul will be exactly what our heavenly Father, our heart-searching God would have it. All pure, holy, perfect, undefiled, and separate from sin; and, according to our capacities, we shall be made as like the Lord himself in all these respects, as the wax is like the seal which stamps its image and superscription.

* See p. 86.

APRIL 1.

"And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, Why hast thou forsaken me?"—Matt. xxvii. 46.

AWFUL and mysterious expressions!! What could they mean? I can understand a little concerning the other sufferings of my Lord in the hall of Pilate, and on the hill of Calvary, up to the utterance of these words; but here the mind is utterly confounded! Christ Jesus forsaken of his adorable Father; forsaken of that Father whom he so intensely loved, and by whom he was loved, with an everlasting and unlimited affection! True, the Saviour was then dying, the just for the unjust, as the atoning Lamb of God; but "these sufferings must have been, both in nature and kind, different from the sufferings due to sinners. The sufferings due to a sinner consist of a painful consciousness of having done wrong—a sense of having offended God—bitter self-reproach for having broken the law of love—and the stormy horrors of a guilty and condemning conscience. In all the dreadful forms of Christ's sufferings, there was nothing like this. His conscience never had a sting; he never felt the hell of self-remorse; he was compassed with sufferings, as an island in an ocean of anguish, but the waves which dashed and foamed around him, found nothing in him to crumble and destroy." *(Jenkyn.)* Yet was there something which exceeded all his bruisings, and being put to shame, when he uttered the cry, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" Mysterious and unspeakable agony! and this, too, undergone by the Son of God, that my soul might have a way opened to it whereby to escape the wrath due to its innumerable transgressions!!

APRIL 2.

"*Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of Hosts.*"—Zech. xiii. 7.

When the eternal God calls to his sword to "awake and smite," whom should we suppose to be the objects of his vengeance? Should we not conclude, of course, that *we* were the very individuals doomed to receive the just reward of our deeds? Certainly these would be our expectations? But, wonder, O heavens! and give ear, O earth! It is not on our guilty heads that this sword is commanded to fall, but it is to come down in all his fury on his own beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who is at once God equal or fellow with the Father, and man as to his human nature derived from his virgin mother; yes, it is to execute vengeance on him, as our substitute. An atonement for our sins must be made before justice and mercy can both take their course in our salvation. And as the ever-blessed Jesus came to be this substitute, so the sword must and did fall on him, that it might not descend on us. O, wonderful love! God so loved the world as to smite his Shepherd, his own Son, his fellow. And this blessed Son did so love the world as thus to come forth, and delight to do and suffer all the will of God. O, my God and Saviour! this is "Love unequalled—mystery immense!" May every faculty of my soul be everlastingly devoted to thee in gratitude and praise. May sin be my abhorrence; may holiness be my delight; may thy sufferings and obedience be my own foundation of hope for time and eternity.

APRIL 3.

"*Oh, that I knew where I might find him!*"—Job xxiii. 3.

THERE are times when God himself is absent from the soul that longs after him; times when we are smitten with a sense of sin; times when the conscience is restless. Yes, there are times in the history of almost all real Christians when they walk in darkness and have little or no light. There may also be, in addition to this, an unusual portion of outward sorrows and trials falling on them; and thus fear, and guilt, and judgment may assail them at once; and the deep of affliction may call to the deep of sin at the noise of the floods of divine anger. (Psalm xlii. 7.) This is, indeed, a sorrowful time, when, for wise and good reasons, we are kept in the dark for a season, and are not permitted to see the light of God's countenance, or to know our own interest in his love. It was so with poor Job, when he exclaimed, "I go forward, but he is not there, and backward, but I cannot perceive him; on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him; he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him." Ah, my ever gracious and compassionate Lord, leave not thy poor servant, or any of thy praying people long in this distressing case, for surely we must then sink under the burden, and never see the light. Support us in and through every sorrow, and sanctify every trial to thy glory and our everlasting good, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

APRIL 4.

" *What tongue can tell, what fancy paint,*
The joys that fill th' enraptur'd saint;
When mix'd with heav'n's triumphant throng,
He shares their bliss, and swells their song.

" *He feels no pain, he fears no want,*
His portion all that God can grant:
To see the Saviour as he is,
And dwell in heav'n with him and his."

" THE spirits of the just are made perfect in peaceful and joyous circumstances; they know God, for they see his face; they know that they love him, for they feel and enjoy it as the warmest and sweetest affection of their hearts: and they are sure God loves them too; for every moment they taste his love, and live upon it in all the rich varieties of its manifestations.

" O! what unknown and endless satisfactions of mind must arise from a full assurance of the love of God! What tongue can express, or what heart can conceive the sacred pleasure that fills every soul in heaven, under the immediate impression of this divine love! when the poor trembling, doubting believer, that knew himself to be infinitely unworthy of the favour of God, or of the meanest place in his house, shall be acknowledged as a son in the midst of his Father's court on high, and amongst millions of congratulating angels.

" No cloud shall ever interpose, no melancholy gloom, no shadow of darkness shall ever arise in those regions; for the countenance of God, like the sun in its highest strength, shall shine and smile on them for ever. And through the length of all their immortality there shall not be the least interruption of the sweet intercourse of love, on God's side, or on theirs."—*(Watts.)*

APRIL 5.

"Man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward."
Job v. 7.

"Ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations."
1 Peter i. 6.

SUCH is now the nature of man, and such the state of the world through the existence of sin, through the ever prevailing mischief which it produces, that we are not only far from perfect, unbroken joy and peace, but we are the subjects of much uneasiness, where we do not groan under a burden of absolute wretchedness.

"This world is a fair theatre of the wisdom and power of God, but it is hung round and replenished with such temptations to fallen man as are proper for a state of trial; soft and flattering temptations, that by the senses are ever drawing away the soul from God and heaven, and breaking in on its divine repose and joy; and while we are surrounded with a thousand dangers, we cannot be said to dwell in perfect peace. The follies and crimes of others afflict the soul of a good man, and put him to pain. Not only the greater vexations, but the little teasing accidents of life that attend us, disturb the sacred rest of the saint, and ruffle and wound his spirit. And the best of men, on this account, are sometimes ready to cry out with David, "woe is me that I dwell in Meshech, and sojourn in the tents of Kedar.'" *(Watts.)* Is it not then a most delightful thought, that "there remaineth a rest for the people of God"—that there is

> "A happy state, where purest joy
> For ever reigns without alloy:
> And happy saints, ordained to prove,
> The fulness of that joy above?"

APRIL 6.

"*Love is the fulfilling of the law.*"—Rom. xiii. 10.

Like every other grace, this is, alas! at a very low standard. "We, indeed, try to love our fellow-creatures and fellow-christians here on earth; but we have so many corrupt passions of our own, and so many infirmities and imperfections belong to our neighbours also, that mutual love is very imperfect. The perfect law of love will never be entirely fulfilled until we are joined to the spirits of the just in glory. In those happy mansions there is no envying of the perfections and honours of our neighbour spirits. No divided opinions, no party quarrels; no seeds of discord are sown in heaven. Our little angry jars and contentions have no place there, and the noise of war and controversy ceases for ever. There are no offences given, and none are taken. Universal benevolence runs through the whole kingdom; and until we arrive there we shall never be made perfect in love, nor shall we see the blessed characters of it, as described in the scriptures, fully copied out in living examples, until we behold them around the throne of the Eternal. In that holy world dwells God himself, who is original love; there resides our Lord Jesus Christ, who is love incarnate; and from that sacred head flows an eternal stream of love through every member, and blesses all the inhabitants of that land with its divine refreshments."—*(Watts.)* May thy grace, O Lord, give me to enter into this spirit of divine love more and more, until I partake of it without admixture and without measure above.

APRIL 7.

"*My soul cleaveth unto the dust; quicken thou me according to thy word.*"—Psalm cxix. 25.

THIS was, more or less frequently, the complaint of every soul now in the presence of God the Saviour. And it is a deep sense of our present spiritual poverty, our imperfections, and sinful defilements, that, in the contrast, make heaven so desirable; because there the spirit is made perfect. Oh, happy and blessed event! "Here sin mingles with all our religious duties: we come before God with our prayers and our songs, but our thoughts wander from him in the midst of worship, and we are gone on a sudden to the ends of the earth. We go up to his temple, and we try to serve him there an hour or two; then we return to the world, and we almost forget the delights of the sanctuary, and the God we have seen there. But the spirits of the just made perfect are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; (Rev. viii. 15.) and though they may not be literally engaged in one everlasting act of worship, yet they are ever busy in some glorious service for him. If they should be sent on a message to other worlds, yet they never wander from the sight of God; for it is said expressly, that the guardian angels of children do always behold the face of our heavenly Father, (Matt. xviii. 10.) even when they are employed on their divine errands in our world; much more may we suppose the spirits of just men made perfect never lose the blissful vision, whatever their employments shall or can be."—*(Watts.)* Oh, enviable, happy, blessed change! Lord, let it come to thy servant in all the abundant riches of thy grace; and thy name shall have all the glory through Jesus Christ. Amen.

APRIL 8.

" *Ah could I find some peaceful bower,*
Where sin hath neither place nor power;
This traitor vile I fain would shun,
But cannot from his presence run.

" *Lord, free me from this deadly foe,*
Which keeps my faith and hope so low;
I long to dwell in that blest home,
Where not one sinful thought can come."

"TEMPTATION and sin can have no place in those blessed regions. These are the evils that belong to earth and hell; but within the gates of heaven, nothing must enter that tempteth, nothing that defileth. (Rev. xxi. 37.) It is the mixture of sinful thoughts and idle words, of sinful actions and irregular affections, that make our state of holiness so imperfect here below. We groan within ourselves, being burdened; we would be rid of these criminal weaknesses, these guilty attendants of our lives," even as those are who have obtained an entrance into the Holy City. Yes, like them, we would put on perfection; we would have the image of God so far completed in us, that nothing contrary to the divine will might remain in all our frame; we would, like them, see God in all the fairest beauties of his holiness, and adore, and love him for ever. And shall we continue to long and pray for this, and, after all, not obtain it; oh, no; the Lord himself has implanted this sorrow for sin; and this longing after an immortality of holiness and perfection; and as it must be well-pleasing to him that his creatures should love and serve him perfectly, so we may rest assured that grace is fitting and forming us for that very privilege. Even so, Amen.

APRIL 9.

"*Increasing in the knowledge of God.*"—Coloss. i. 10.

THIS is the case *now* with all who are led by the Spirit, and it will be the order of things *hereafter* through all eternity. It will furnish one of the greatest sources of happiness in heaven, to be ever increasing in the knowledge of the eternal, incomprehensible Jehovah; and of the unfathomable depths of his wisdom, of his ways, and works. "In heaven the works of Almighty God will lie open to our view, and we shall see the wonders of the universe. The nature and character of the holy angels, with all the astonishing wonders of the invisible world, will be seen and understood. The great events of time, from its commencement to its termination, will appear to every eye. The grand mystery of redemption, by the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, will be thrown open, that we may see the wisdom and goodness of God. The mystery of providence, in all ages, will appear; and it will then be fully known that God has governed the world in righteousness, and the people in equity." (*Edmondson.*) There will then appear the broad seal of perfection stamped on all the works of his hands, and on all the movements of his moral government. All that he did himself, and all that he permitted to be done by every order and description of agents, whether good or evil in themselves, will be seen to have accomplished his unerring purposes, to have augmented his glory, and, on the whole, to have immensely added to the felicity of his rational creatures. Nay, all will be seen and felt to have worked together for our individual and eternal good, as though there had been no other soul to have reaped the benefit. Oh, the unspeakable happiness of everlastingly increasing in the knowledge of God!

APRIL 10.

"*My meditation of him shall be sweet.*"—Psalm civ. 34.

HAPPY is that man whose affections and desires are so spiritualized as to find his soul in its sweetest employment when meditating on the attributes, the ways, the works, and kingdom of God as revealed in his word! whose thoughts fly upward and fasten on those things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard. Such a man has spiritual and mental food to eat that others know not of. But, after all, how surpassingly sweet must be the thoughts and meditations of those spirits of just men who are made perfect in heaven? "all the subjects that engage their meditations are noble, sublime, and purifying, in the highest degree. These are the glorious perfections of God; the wondrous works of God in creation; the government of God; redemption and salvation by grace; and the high duties of angels and saints. These subjects, with others which cannot be enumerated, are vast and inexhaustible; and will afford ineffable delight to all the sons of glory. Every thought will elevate the soul, exalt the Lord of glory, and produce substantial happiness. Every thought will promote holiness, peace, and joy; engage the soul in sweet and delightful exercises, and raise it to that state of elevated bliss which we cannot now conceive." *(Edmondson.)* O, my blessed God, be pleased so to purify and cleanse the thoughts and meditations of my heart by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, that I may daily find increasing sweetness in my meditations on thee; and thy name shall have all the praise, and all the glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

APRIL 11.

"And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea and upon the earth lifted up his hand to heaven, and sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, that there should be time no longer."
Rev. x. 5, 6.

When these solemn words will receive their full accomplishment in the end of this world, and in the winding up of all the dispensations of providence connected with our earth, is known only unto the Most High himself. There, however, is another season, when, so far as I am concerned, this declaration will go forth; and then I must cease to be the child of time, and at once enter the ranks of eternal beings. How ought I then to observe and meditate on every declining day, and watch every setting sun, as a sure and certain token that the closing hour of time with me is all that much nearer. O, what unknown realities will then at once put for ever to flight all the bubbles, the vanities, and shadows of this delusive state of things! Salvation, heaven, and glory lost for ever, or gained for ever—Christ Jesus looking on me with a smile that enraptures and will enrapture for ever, or casting on me a frown that will follow, and fasten, and deepen in the soul through all eternity. Angels of light and the spirits of just men made perfect, meeting, and hailing, and blessing me with all the welcome of holy heavenly love; or angels of darkness, and condemned spirits of unrepenting and unpardoned men, sounding in my ears their execrations, and groans, and rage, and despair! Oh, Lord God of Hosts, daily and hourly be with, and fit, and preserve me for my latter end, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

APRIL 12.

"*There shall be time no longer.*"—Rev. x. 6.

AWFUL, unspeakably awful, as this annunciation must be to him who has sinned and squandered away the years and days given him to make his calling and election sure, yet it will be a most blessed and joyous event to those who, through grace, have improved their time, and who are waiting for the conclusion of it with christian hope. Happy individuals, who have known what godly sorrow for sin, and what faith in the Redeemer's blood are in their own experience. Whatever passing regrets poor human nature may for a little while feel in the prospect of leaving beloved relatives or friends behind, yet grace will soon triumph over these sorrows, and as the soul looks forward beyond the bounds of time and of all mortality, and by faith sees things within the vail, it will rejoice with unspeakable joy that time is not to be lengthened out beyond its present range of three score years and ten. "Time with us once ended, there will also be an end of all our darknesses and difficulties; the season of painful ignorance and error will then come to an end: we shall wander no more in mistakes or folly; we shall behold all things in the light of God, and see him face to face, who is the original beauty and the eternal truth. We shall see him in himself and in his Son Jesus, the brightest and fairest image of the Father, and shall know him as we are known." Hasten, O Lord, that state of ripeness of grace in my soul, that shall make me quite fit and ready for the word to be spoken concerning me, "that there shall be time no longer." Then, through all eternity, I will adore and praise thee through Jesus Christ.

APRIL 13.

"*There shall be time no longer.*"—Rev. x. 6.

THERE is an appointed time for man on earth—there is an hour when, in the plans of my gracious Father, my time will be permitted to run no longer. So be it, Lord: only carry on and complete thine own work in my soul, and make me altogether what thou wouldst love to find me; and then I ask not when my time shall end; nor do I request that it may be either lengthened or shortened one day or one hour beyond thine own unerring appointment. From that moment all conflict with my spiritual adversaries will be ended. No more warfare between the flesh and the spirit; no more time to combat with the world or satan, who by a thousand ways hath attempted to deceive me, and to bear me off from my heavenly hope. My warfare will then be accomplished, my victory will be complete, and I shall more than overcome through him who has loved me. Death is the christian's last enemy that remains to be overcome; and, even now, his sting is taken away by faith in the Lord Jesus; and then I shall have finished the conquest, and shall be assured of the crown.

Life is often like a troubled ocean, and death is sometimes as a wide and deep rolling river. Yet,

"Render'd safe by Christ's protection,
I shall pass the wat'ry waste;
Trusting to his wise direction,
I shall gain the port at last;
And with wonder,
Think on toils and dangers past."

APRIL 14.

"*Them that honour me, I will honour.*"—1 Sam. ii. 30.

Few men, comparatively speaking, have great wealth or great talents of any description wherewith to honour God; and few, comparatively speaking, are called out of the private and ordinary walks of life, to stand forth as public heralds of the gospel, either at home or abroad. The greater part of all mankind, and of the christian kind especially, are placed in the humble and lowly ranks, unfitted to shine among their fellow men as teachers and leaders, and most of these pass quietly and unnoticed down the stream of life, but little known while they live, and soon entirely forgotten after they are dead; yet, among these, does the minister of Christ find not a few bright examples of individuals honouring the Lord by a faith and practice that would adorn, but seldom is found, to honour princes. Oh, it is, indeed, a soul-refreshing sight to behold the poor and distressed, the afflicted, tried, and tempted sons and daughters of poverty, lying on a sick and dying bed, honouring the Lord by a patient and submissive, by a contented and unmurmuring spirit. Tempted, like Job, to repine and charge God foolishly, but still, through grace, blessing and praising him for all the past, and confidently trusting him for all the future; feeling that they are the chief of sinners, but rejoicing that Christ has promised to blot out all their transgressions. Lord, give me thus to honour thy wisdom and faithfulness under every coming trial of pain, and sickness, and death, as I have seen many of my dear poor people honour thee.

APRIL 15.

" ' Come, angel of the covenant,
Oh, come, and faithful to thy promise, stand
Prepared to walk with me through death's dark vale.'
And let my faith grow strong, and stronger still;
That all who watch beside my dying couch
May learn its power to bear the spirit up.
Thus gently, gracious God, dismiss the soul
Its earthy residence; absorbed in thee.
' As vanishes the morning star that goes
Not down behind the darkened west, nor hides
Obscured among the the tempests of the sky,
But melts away into the light of heaven.'
So let my Spirit leave this lower world."

THUS would I pray, and thus would I depart to the glory of God my Saviour, and to the edification of my surviving friends and fellow Christians. Oh, my adorable Redeemer, be not angry with thy servant for such a wish. The privilege is, indeed, beyond all price, yea, beyond all human powers to comprehend; but it is not greater than thine own unbounded and unmerited mercies have bestowed on myriads of the human race, once sinners like myself, not greater than thou hast bestowed on many who were once dear to me in the bonds of thy gospel and in christian love. Yet, here, as in every thing else, I would say, not my will but thine be done. Only let death prove to me the entrance into everlasting life. Only let the hour of my departure from earth bring me into thy smiling presence in heaven, and all will be well. The song that thy redeemed and glorified children are now singing around thy throne is the very theme that will suit me. " Washed from my sins in thy blood," will be the happy and unceasing burden of my song, as it is of theirs already landed, and as it must and will be of all who shall ever pass from earth to heaven.

APRIL 16.

"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord."
Psalm lxxxiv. 2.

To the real Christian the Sabbaths of the Lord are days precious and desirable above all other days, and the house of the Lord is the place where his soul most delights to be. Yet it frequently is the will of our heavenly Father to keep his children away from these his beloved courts; to forbid them the refreshment of ordinances, and the enjoyments of public worship; sickness lays them on a bed of languishing, or age, or infirmities, or other circumstances of the Lord's appointing, hold them back; so that while multitudes are saying to each other, "Come, let us go up to the house of the Lord," or are actually sitting under the word with great delight, these are sad and sorrowful, pensive, and, perhaps, in tears at home.

Pardon, O Lord, pardon these tears, for they ought not to flow; thy will, in these dispensations of thy providence, as in all others, is holy, and wise, and just, and good. Nor shall thy longing and praying children lose any blessing through these privations. Thou canst, and thou wilt come down, and meet, and bless them where they are; and whenever thou dost so, then their solitary chamber is, indeed, a refreshing garden of the Lord,. and their sick-bed becomes as the gate of heaven. Sweet and precious as the public ordinances of thine house are often found, yet it is thy presence and blessing which alone render them so: and that presence and blessing are not confined to temples made with hands, nor to public assemblies, nor to Sabbath ordinances; they are promised wherever a soul hungers and thirsts after thee. Oh, may I ever find thee thus near and precious to my soul.

APRIL 17.

" Happy the heart where graces reign,
Where love inspires the breast;
Love is the brightest of the train,
And perfects all the rest.

" This is the grace that lives and sings,
When faith and hope shall cease;
'Tis this shall strike our joyful strings
In the sweet realms of peace."

" God is Love." Angels of every order and degree are partakers of love to the utmost extent of their capacities; and all the spirits of the just, all the members of Christ's redeemed and justified family are made perfect in love in heaven. But what is the love of angels? and what is the love of a glorified saint made perfect? Alas, I cannot tell; I would fain realize both of these to my soul, but I cannot! The deepest, purest, and most entrancing conceptions and experience of love to each other on earth will still partake of so much that is carnal, that is sensual, and mortal, that it will bear little or no resemblance to the love of heavenly spirits towards each other. In reflecting on the happy event of meeting and being for ever with those in heaven, whom we most deeply and tenderly loved on earth, we seem to feel a reluctance at the idea, that any of our present conceptions and exercises of love should not exist there; and to our carnal minds it is difficult to imagine how love can be there so wonderfully enlarged and enrapturing, if it is not to be found and felt in something like what it is known to be here on earth. This is our infirmity, and we shall do well to watch our hearts very narrowly on this subject, and continually to pray, that all our conceptions of heavenly things may be holy, heavenly, and sublime; that all our conceptions of the intercourse of saints and angels may be pure and angelic, such as a God of Love would have them to be.

APRIL 18.

"*And they (the angels) say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.*"—John xx. 13.

And thus, were they permitted, would those benevolent spirits, who minister to the heirs of salvation, often address us when we are weeping over the remembrance of our beloved, but departed friends and relatives. It is not sinful to drop an occasional tear on the grave of those who were once dear to us. But if we have good evidence of their having fallen asleep in Jesus, we should thank God on every remembrance of them. For could the voice of these blessed souls reach our ears, we should hear them speak in the language of their Lord, "Weep not for us, but for yourselves; you are still encompassed with temptations and difficulties, we have surmounted them all: you are wrestling with many errors, we are perfect in knowledge, and see divine mysteries in a new light: you are labouring in the race, we are crowned, and have received the prize: you are still striving in the battle, we have finished the war through divine grace, and are secure in the city of triumph: you are yet travelling through the valley of tears, but we are refreshing ourselves in the gardens of pleasure, and on the hills of everlasting gladness. Hold on with courage, and faith, and patience; there are mansions of joy prepared for you also, and we wait your happy arrival."—*(Watts.)* Turn then, my sorrowing heart, turn from these afflictive recollections of thy departed friends! consider them, "not as lost, but gone before;" and gird up the loins of thy mind, watch and pray, and seek to be found at thy post whensoever the Bridegroom shall come; then thou shalt see them again, and with them be for ever with the Lord.

APRIL 19.

"*Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.*"—Luke xxiii. 28.

THUS did the compassionate, suffering Redeemer address those kind daughters of Jerusalem who followed, who bewailed, and lamented him as he passed on through a multitude of blasphemous revilers and persecutors to the hill of Calvary. Bitter indeed was that cup which remained for him to drink, infinitely more bitter than those sympathizing women could conceive; and Jesus knew all that it contained, and how that he was about to drink it up, even to the very dregs; yet he lost sight of what he had already suffered, of what he was then suffering, and of what he was about to suffer. Yes, he lost sight of all in his sympathies for others, as he foresaw the trials and sorrows they would shortly be called to endure. Moreover, it would be but a little while, and he should have finished the work that he came on earth to do, and then he should return unto his own kingdom and glory, while those tender-hearted women would have to remain for some years on earth, and see, and hear, and feel such things as would make them exclaim, "Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bare, and the paps which never gave suck." And thus it ofttimes falls out in the dying chambers of the Lord's children, while the arm of death is uplifted to strike the fatal blow, and the bystanders are weeping at what they see, and at what is shortly to come to pass, their suffering, dying relatives can forget themselves and comfort others; can rejoice in the change that awaits their souls in that heaven to which they are quickly to soar, and grieve at the thought of what the survivors will yet have to undergo in days to come on earth.

APRIL 20.

"The Lord will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart."
1 Cor. iv. 5.

Oh, what a day will that be! "What manifestations of the human character will then be made. How different will then be the appearance which pride, ambition, and avarice, sloth, lust, and intemperance, will wear in the sight of God, in the sight of an assembled universe, and in the sight of those who have yielded themselves up to those evil passions, from that which they had customarily in the present world. How low will the haughty man be then bowed down. How will the splendour and power of conquest set in darkness. How will the golden mountains of opulence melt away, and leave the dreaming possessor, poor, and naked, and miserable, and in want of all things. How little, in innumerable instances, will the worldly great then appear! How contemptible the renowned; how weak the powerful: how foolish the 'wise and disputers of this world! On the contrary, with what confidence and joy will the poor, despised, humble Christian 'lift up his head,' and take his proper place in the great scale of being, because he 'beholds his redemption arrived.' Here, first, his character will be openly acknowledged, and his worth confessed. Last in the present world, he will be numbered among the *first* in the world to come. A feeble, faded, half-extinguished lamp on this side of the grave, he will 'shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of his Father.'" *(Dwight.)* Thus let it be with thy servant, O Lord, and then it will little matter how I pass through this Christ-despising world to thy kingdom and glory.

APRIL 21.

"Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live."
Isaiah xxxviii. 1.

O, THOU all merciful Lord God! in whose hands are the issues of life and death, in the name of thy beloved Son, and in thine own name, and by all thy declared faithfulness, by all the grace, and glory, and long-suffering, and tender compassion inseparable from thyself, I beseech thee not to call me hence at an hour when I am in an unfit frame and state of mind to depart. But, Lord, bear with thine unworthy servant, and daily stir up my soul to increased watchfulness, to more holiness of living, to more fervent love, to stronger faith, and to more aspiring hope. Bring heaven down into my soul; let me feel that my heart and treasure are above, and so cause me to pass through the remainder of my days on earth, that, come what will, I may be found at my post, looking and longing for thine appearing. Keep my soul happily detached from the world, and my affections so regulated towards every earthly and creature object, that I may stand ready to leave all at a moment, and joyfully go forth, with a bright shining lamp, so soon as the Bridegroom is announced. Let the fruits of a true repentance for sin, and of a newness of life, and of a lively faith in Christ Jesus, and of a glowing charity towards all men, be found increasing as my days increase, that when I die these may follow me as evidences of my regeneration and adoption into thy family; as evidences that I have been born again of the spirit, justified by the blood of the Lamb, and made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

APRIL 22.

"*How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?*"—Jer. xii. 5.

THE river Jordan separated the land of Canaan, that type of heaven, from the waste howling wilderness which lay on the opposite side, and prefigured this moral wilderness-world in which mankind sojourn for an allotted season. Consequently Jordan was an emblem of death, and as such it is frequently alluded to in the word of God. Now every child of man has to enter these waters. The invisible world is parted from the one we now inhabit by this boundary. Death must be encountered by the children of God, and by the children of the wicked one; and as we pass safely through this stream, so will be our portion for ever. There are seasons of the year when the waters of the Jordan are very deep and rapid, times when they overflow their bank and render a passage much more formidable than at other periods. And so are there times, and seasons, and circumstances which make the passage of death much more alarming and dreadful than at others. Is the soul called to depart suddenly, and in the darkness of ignorance, and amidst the bewildering mists of superstition—Is it called away from the banqueting hall, the theatre, the gay assembly; from the pursuits, the pomps and parade of dissipation, of pride, of lust, or vanity, oh, how will it be with such in the swellings of Jordan? How will each of these do in those mighty waters? God of all grace, keep my soul every day in a believing, a loving, an obedient frame; may I daily and hourly lean on Christ Jesus as my beloved and my friend.

"Then shall I reach that happy place
Where saints are ever blest;
Then shall I see my Father's face,
And in his bosom rest."

APRIL 23.

"*How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?*"—Jer. xii. 5.

As I must certainly be called on to go down into these waters, or rather into the river of death, of which Jordan is the scriptural emblem, and as I know not how soon that command may be issued, it surely behoves me every evening of my life to put these questions to my soul—"How do I expect to pass that stream? What directions have I received concerning the nature of this river? What help do I expect when about to enter its margin, and what assistance when its swelling torrents roll over my head, and where do I expect to be cast, where do I expect to be landed when I am thrown from its waves on the shores of an eternal world?" Now, my soul, look for an answer to these questions! Surely it is not in any wisdom, or strength, or courage of thine own that thou dost expect to encounter this last and solemn conflict in the flesh! No, it is in the grace and strength, in the faithfulness and promises of God my Saviour that I must pass over. These shall bear me up and carry me through as the ark bore up and carried Noah safely over all the waves and streams of those waters that destroyed the earth and swept all its inhabitants into one common grave. Christ Jesus shall be the ark into which I will seek for grace and faith, so to shut myself in, that as death approaches my soul may be stayed in peace, and feel its safety in the all-sufficiency of his most precious blood; then,

"Tho' Jordan's stream be wondrous deep,
And Canaan's walls are high;
Yet he that guards me while I sleep,
Will guide me when I die."

APRIL 24.

"How wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?"—Jer. xii 5.

How do I expect to approach its margin? and what assistance do I look for when this mortal frame sinks beneath its overflowing stream? And, again I ask, where do I expect its waves will convey my spirit? O, thou eternal Son of the eternal and living God, "who hast by thine own death destroyed him that hath the power of death, that is the devil, and thus delivered those who, through fear of death, were all their lifetime subject to bondage," thou who hast redeemed my soul from the power of the grave, I will look unto thee for all the assistance which a sinking body and a departing soul will then stand in need of; I will endeavour to recollect some of thine own most precious and suitable promises, and I will implore that courage and that faith in thy word which, as my heart and flesh are failing, shall sweetly comfort me with the assurance, with the happy experience, "that thou art the strength of my heart, and wilt be my portion for ever." Holding fast thus by thy covenant and promised mercies, I desire to go down into the very swellings of Jordan; and oh, my gracious, my only refuge, my God and Saviour! may I not hope, yea, rest confident, that when this mortal frame does actually sink speechless and lifeless beneath the waters, my soul shall rise uninjured and immortal, and find itself standing even in thy adorable presence; in a world where pain, and sin, and death are no more found. Lord, grant that thus it may be with thy servant as he draws near this solemn hour; then,

"Fill'd with delight, my raptured soul
Would here no longer stay;
Tho' Jordan's waves around me roll,
Fearless I'll launch away."

APRIL 25.

" *Ah! when did wisdom covet length of days,*
Or seek its bliss in pleasure, wealth, or praise?
No: wisdom views with an indifferent eye
All finite joys, all blessings born to die."

WHETHER my soul enters into the spirit of these lines or not, they are truths, such as will be felt, ere long, with a weight of conviction that no words can express. Alas, what do those unhappy souls now think who have lost an eternal salvation for these dying and empty bubbles? Pleasure, and wealth, and praise, and length of years on earth were once their only desire; and in pursuing of these they wilfully and scornfully passed by the narrow road and the strait gate which lead to undying pleasures at God's right hand, and rejected those unfading riches which are in his heavenly kingdom, and thought light of those praises which are uttered by the Almighty himself, and which entail an everlasting, ever perfect, and ever augmenting felicity. Lord, evermore make me wise unto salvation by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Ever let me feel, as my days pass over my head, that

" The soul on earth is an immortal guest,
Compelled to starve at an unreal feast;
A spark that upwards tends by nature's force;
A stream diverted from its parent source;
A drop dissevered from the boundless sea;
A moment parted from eternity!
A pilgrim, panting for a rest to come;
An exile, anxious for his native home."

And under these convictions may I gladly receive my daily supplies of earthly comforts and mercies, but never desire to have my portion here, or to set up my rest on this side of Jordan. I am made capable of glorifying thee, my God, and of enjoying thee for ever, and may this, and only this, be my satisfying portion.

APRIL 26.

"*What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul.*"—Matt. xvi. 26.

WHAT makes the value of even one soul so unspeakably greater than even a thousand worlds of mere matter is, that the latter "are without life, without consciousness, without enjoyment; incapable in themselves of action, knowledge, virtue, or voluntary usefulness. A soul, on the contrary, is possessed of all these exalted powers, and is capable of possessing all these sublime attributes. A soul can know, love, and glorify its Creator; can be stamped with his image, and adorned with his beauty and loveliness; and can appear delightful and desirable to his eye. It can 'reflect, as a mirror, the glory of the Lord, and be changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.' It can love and bless its fellow-souls, be loved and blessed by them. In all these glorious attainments it can advance with an unceasing progress throughout eternity. In this progress it can rise to the heights where angels now dwell; and, passing those heights, can ascend higher and higher, till, in the distant ages of endless being, it shall look down on the most exalted created excellence that now exists, as the mere dawnings of infantine intelligence. Worlds and suns were created for the use of souls; but souls were created for the use of God." *(Dwight.)* If, then, this soul be lost, what remuneration can be made? Has the unhappy man obtained the whole world, and that for a thousand years of uninterrupted enjoyment, yet it were well for him had he never been born! Oh, what shall a man give or get in exchange for his soul?

APRIL 27.

"*The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God.*"—Ps. xiv. 1.

THE transgressor who is deeply in love with his sins, and determined at all hazards to indulge in them, can never feel a love to God, or to his holy word. On the contrary, this wretched being hates the controul of the Almighty, and dis-relishes his holy character, and dreads the in-spection, the judgment, and retribution of his Maker. Now such a man must either repent of and forsake sin, or he must harden his own heart against "the stings and arrows of outrageous conscience," and by some means endeavour to end them, or he can have no rest or peace at any time, or in any degree. Among the various courses that unhappy sinners take to do this, nothing seems to furnish so quiet a refuge from anxiety and alarm in a course of iniquity as the belief that there is no God. There are those who imagine that no man ever did arrive at such a conviction, but this is not correct. No man, I am sure, can ever become an atheist until God withdraws his Spirit altogether from him, and in righteous judgment gives the sinner up to follow the devices and desires of his own heart. The question then is, does the Lord ever do this? And the answer is clear, that when men strive and fight against conscience, calls, and provi-dences, and go on to a certain length in sinning against knowledge and conviction, that in such a state of things, "God sends, that is, permits Satan to send, strong delusions, that they may believe a lie, to the intent that such characters may be damned who believe not the truth, but have plea-sure in unrighteousness." 2 Thess. ii. 10—12.

APRIL 28.

"*The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt; they have done abominable works.*"—Psalm xiv. 1.

THE man who denies the existence of God is an atheist, and his corrupt and abominable doings have at length caused the Lord to take his Holy Spirit entirely from him: and then, such are the absurdities of his ideas, such the monstrosity of his opinions, and such the blindness and iniquity of his heart, that he is designated by God himself "*a fool.*" This does not mean that the person is become an idiot, or that he is deficient in general knowledge; for he may be, as some atheists have been, a man of study, taste, and literature. He may be a naturalist, a botanist, a chemist, a mathematician, a philosopher, a poet, and many other things. Yet, with all these he may, through the corruptions and abominations of his heart, and of the withdrawment of God's Spirit, become *an atheist, a fool, a wonder*, to the angels in heaven, and to the devils in hell. My blessed God, it has been thy grace, and not my goodness, that has preserved me from being thus hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. It is to thy rich and unmerited mercy I have been drawn to seek the atonement of my unnumbered transgressions in the blood of the Lamb, and the renewal of my heart by the Holy Ghost. O that I may ever find my supremest delight in the contemplation of thy Divine Majesty, and of the glory and wisdom of thy ways and works! Above all, may I be fitted for appearing in thy presence, to love and serve thee as a spirit made perfect through all eternity.

APRIL 29.

"The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God. They are corrupt; they have done abominable works."—Psalm xiv. 1.

THE most awful proof of the degraded and fallen state of man, and of the besotting and intoxicating effects of sin, are found in the fact, that there really are men who arrive at a state of atheism—of disbelief in the existence of a God. Men whose corrupt and abominable hearts have first desired there should be no such great and glorious Being, and who have been righteously given up to believe their own abominable, atheistical wishes. To these wretched men it appears that all the human race are the creatures of mere accident or fate. "That men are the subjects of no moral government, that they are unsusceptible of moral obligation; incapable, therefore, of virtue, excellence, and loveliness; that they are the offspring, and under the controul, of necessity or chance; united to their fellow-men by nothing but time and place; insulated in all their interests, and those the interests of a swine only; without the knowledge or the existence of law or government, merit or reward; and born merely to breathe, to eat, to drink, to sleep, to propagate his kind, to decay, and to die. How obvious is it that on such wretched and abominable principles there can be erected no personal worth, enjoyment, or hope; no common good, no sense of rectitude, and no efforts for the promotion of general happiness."—*(Dwight.)* And this is really considered as wisdom by many a man of science, falsely so called! Yes, for sin and abominable doings, unseen by man, but witnessed by God, have hardened their hearts, befooled their minds, and quenched the Spirit!

APRIL 30.

"The Lord, Himself, the mighty LORD,
Vouchsafes to be my guide;
The shepherd by whose constant care
My wants are all supplied."

MY soul, thou hast lately contemplated the gloom and guilt of atheism. Now direct thy thoughts heavenward; and while the wretched unbeliever considers all things as borne on in a blind and restless career of irresistible necessity or chance, thou shalt be happier in pursuing the good and old way of scriptural faith and hope. Yes, my adorable Lord, my Guide, my Father, and my everlasting Friend in Christ Jesus, "Wherever I am, there thou art; thine ear is always open to my prayer; thine eye is ever open to my dangers, sorrows, fears, and wants; thine hand is ever extended to supply, to relieve, to comfort, to save. Thou, my Almighty God, art every where to be found as my friend—in the crowd, and in solitude, by night and by day; never absent, never forgetful, never unkind, never encumbered by any concerns which will prevent my wants from being regarded, nor surrounded by any difficulties which can hinder them from being supplied." O Lord, I bless thee! O Lord, I adore thee! for what thou hast done in giving me this hope, and for every consolation it has brought to my mind; and I beseech thee daily to increase my faith, my knowledge, my love, so that in all things I may see and enjoy thee as my portion, until I awake up in the likeness, and arrive at the stature of the fulness of Christ in thy kingdom and glory. Then I shall perfectly love thee, and worthily magnify thy holy name, for ever and ever.

MAY 1.

"The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: but while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also. So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? He said unto them, An enemy hath done this."—Matt. xiii. 24—28.

The fields around us have to-day exhibited a literal view of this subject. A few weeks ago our neighbours were employed in sowing their best seed-corn; and now it is sprung up, how many tares and noxious weeds are showing themselves! But whence came these cumberers and defilers of the soil? Alas! their seeds have been for immemorable ages lodged in the earth, and there they have yearly vegetated to the grief of the husbandman, and to the injury, and frequently the destruction of the grain. O, my soul! what a solemn and striking subject has in all this passed before thee this very day. Thine heart, it is hoped, has had some portion of the good seed of grace cast into it by God the Holy Ghost; but those tares which the enemy sowed in the hearts of our first parents in Eden, have vegetated through every age and in every season, and are found springing up within the little field of thine own bosom every day; they are indigenous, the very natives of the degenerate soil of every human heart. But shall I sit down contented in this state? or shall I despair of seeing things brought into a better condition? Lord, by thy grace assisting me I will do neither; but I will take courage from thy many great and precious promises; and I will watch and wait, and look to thee continually for grace and strength to become what thou wouldst have me to be.

MAY 2.

"*The servant said unto him, Wilt thou then, that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say unto the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*"—Matt. xiii. 28—30.

THE permission of sin into Eden, and the universal and awful prevalence of all its dire consequences from thence down to the present hour, are among those deep things that can never be accounted for by the inhabitants of this world. The unexpected appearance of the tares among the wheat are represented in the parable as exciting surprise and regret in the minds of the servants. And, no doubt, but that the appearance and the rooting and vegetating of sin in the field of the human heart, in Eden, did create astonishment and grief in the minds of the angels of light. Nor is it clear to us, that these mighty and intelligent beings can, even now, fully comprehend all the reasons which influenced an infinitely holy and gracious God to permit such a mysterious, and, to us, such a melancholy dispensation, in his moral government. O, how often has it appeared to my short and imperfect apprehension, that it would have been better for the world had this never been permitted. But such is not the view of him who is wise in counsel and mighty in operation! Lord, give me faith, humility, patience, and resignation, in and under the present order of things. May I rest satisfied that all thy ways are infinitely holy, and wise, and just, and good, and that what I know not now, I shall know hereafter, to thine everlasting glory, and to my own unceasing happiness, through Jesus Christ.

MAY 3.

"*The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*"—James v. 8.

"O MY Saviour, hasten the time of thy return, send forth thy angels, and let the solemn trumpet sound. Delay not, lest the living give up their hopes; delay not, lest earth should grow like hell, and thy church, by divisions, be all crumbled into dust; delay not, lest thine enemies get advantage of the flock, and lest pride, hypocrisy, sensuality, and unbelief, prevail against thy little remnant, and share among them thy whole inheritance, and when thou comest thou find not faith on the earth; delay not, lest the grave should boast of victory, and having learnt rebellion of its guest, refuse to deliver thee up thy due! O, hasten that great resurrection-day, when thy command shall go forth, and none shall disobey; when the sea and the earth shall yield up their hostages, and all that sleep in the grave shall awake, and the dead in Christ shall rise first; when the seed which thou sowest corruptible, shall come forth incorruptible; and graves that received rottenness and dust shall return thee glorious stars and suns. Return, O Lord; how long? O, let thy kingdom come! Thy desolate bride saith, 'Come!' for thy Spirit within her saith, 'Come;' and teacheth her thus to pray with groanings that cannot be uttered; yea, the whole creation saith, 'Come,' waiting to be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. Thou thyself hast said, 'Surely I come quickly.' Amen. Even so, Come Lord Jesus!"—*(Baxter.)*

MAY 4.

"Then Abraham gave up the ghost, and died in a good old age, an old man, and full of years."—Gen. xxv. 8.

And thus ended the mortal career, the earthly pilgrimage of this honoured servant of Jehovah. Having lived and walked by faith, he departed full of faith and immortality, and now he is present with the Lord, and receives all the promises in an ever overflowing portion of those joys which are at his Saviour's right hand for evermore. Blessed Lord! how many important lessons hast thou taught thy church and people through all ages, from what is left written concerning this thy servant, and thy dealings with him and his! May every aged professor of the gospel tread in good old Abraham's steps, and finally sit down with him in thy kingdom. Thou hast promised, "that the righteous man shall flourish like the palm-tree; that he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon, that those who are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of their God; that they shall bring forth fruit in old age; and be fat and flourishing; to show that the Lord is upright, and that thou art the rock of thy people." Psalm xcii. 12—15. May it be thus with all who name the name of Jesus in the ranks of aged professors! Then shall their grey hairs be a crown of honour indeed. "Being full of years and full of faith, full of the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ; they shall be comely and beautiful beyond all the beauty and comeliness of youth itself." On the other hand, how melancholy an object is a hardened and insensible old sinner! Full of years, and full of all manner of uncleanness and unrepented of sins, he seems to defile the very air he breathes, and to pollute the very ground on which he treads.

MAY 5.

"*The wicked is driven away in his wickedness.*"—Prov. xiv. 32.

This is a short but a very complete and awful description of the end of all and every unrepenting and unrenewed child of Adam. They are removed, they are driven away sore against their will, and they depart in and with all their unrighteousness about them, going on from year to year, and even to the very last year, frequently, of a long life, still calculating on time to come. "They hunger and thirst after more time and more years, when they are old, equally as they did when they were young; they are anxious still for more of life, since they know none other than a life in this world. They think it good to be here, who know of no better being, or who have no hopes of a better state. They that have not a hope of everlasting life, can never be willing and pleased to let go this life. Alas! it is most sad to see an old man, who has no strength of body to enjoy life, still possessing an insatiable desire to live." But these desires avail not; by and by, he is driven away. My God, my Saviour, and my Friend, I bless thee, I praise thee, I magnify thy holy name that I am not in this awful condition! Not unto me, O Lord, not unto me, but to thy name be all the praise, and all the glory for ever. May it be my privileged state to wait patiently for thy coming to remove me hence; but with this patience and willingness to remain all thine appointed time, may I, with thy servant saint Paul, still feel a desire rather to depart and be with Christ, under the happy assurance that where he is there I shall be also.

MAY 6.

"*The servant said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? But he said, Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.*"
Matt. xiii. 28, 29.

THIS is exactly the question we should have expected the servants to ask—the very thing which the angels of God might be expected to request permission to do; namely, that sinners should be rooted out, and that righteousness and heavenly peace might grow and flourish undisturbed by the presence and power of iniquity. But this must not be; the Lord himself says, Nay. He in whose hands are the issues of life and of death says, Let both grow together until the harvest. Let the tares still continue among the wheat, let the field of the world make room for the sinner as well as for the saint! Such is the divine will. That the Lord approved of the motives of his servant in desiring to clear the field from those tares which seemed to dishonour him, and to injure his children, there is no room to doubt; but he had many deep and infinitely wise reasons for preventing their doing it; and these reasons are at this moment in full operation, and to them it is that the tares are yet permitted a place among the wheat. In many points of view the thing at present is to us inscrutable, but we shall understand more of it by and by. Meanwhile the Lord, in many ways, does evidently over-rule this evil for good; the wrath of men and of devils is even now made to praise him, and the remainder of their wrath he can and does restrain, whether we have wisdom and grace to perceive it or not. Glory be unto God most High.

MAY 7.

"*But he said, Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.*"—Matt. xiii. 29, 30.

WHAT an infinite mercy it is that the Lord himself is the Judge of all the earth! and that the work of deciding who are his, and who are not, is not delegated to angel or archangel, or to any created being whatever! No, not the angels of heaven, with all their amazing wisdom and understanding, would be able, in all cases, to form a correct judgment. Such is frequently the fair aspect which the sinner puts on, and such are occasionally the infirmities and imperfections of the saint, that the highest created being could not be trusted to decide the true state and character of all mankind. Then, again, there are many individuals who, to-day, are as the injurious trees, and, as such, would be rooted out, and cast into the fire, whom the Lord in his rich and sovereign grace intends, by and by, to call into his service, to convince, convert, sanctify, and save with an everlasting salvation. Oh, no, it is not for man, for angel, or archangel to attempt to pluck up the tares. The long suffering mercy of the Lord gives them space for repentance, whether they repent or not. And meanwhile he can, and frequently does, overrule all their annoyances, and brings good out of this evil. May our souls bow in child-like submission to all his holy will; may we ever rest satisfied that all he does, and that all he permits, is, on the whole, the very wisest and the best order of things that could, or ever can be in existence.

MAY 8.

"Say why should friendship grieve for those
Who safe arrived on Canaan's shore?
Released from all their hurtful foes,
They are not lost—but gone before."

THERE is an answer at hand, that will justify even the Christian for grieving within measure for departed christian friends. God forms kindred christian minds to love and edify each other. It is one of the enjoyments of heaven itself, and for ever will it increasingly be so. Christ Jesus is the head of the body, even of his church; and each individual is a distinct member of that body; and if one member suffers or rejoices, all the others suffer or rejoice with it. Christ Jesus is also the fountain out of which flows all their happiness in time and eternity; but this fountain carries forward its waters of life from channel to channel; from one instrument or member to another. When, therefore, a dear friend or member is severed from the body—when one of those streams that refreshed our souls is dried up—when one of our dear, edifying, christian comforters is gone, there is a cause which justifies a certain portion of grief. It is true, we are greatly relieved at the thought that

"They are not lost—but gone before."

Yet we cannot but feel our bereavement, and, feeling it, we cannot but grieve over it. It is a delightful reflection, that now

"Secure from ev'ry mortal care,
By sin and sorrow vex'd no more,
Eternal happiness they share,
Who are not lost—but gone before."

But as we are yet behind—are yet surrounded with evil, and have one less comfort left us—one less kindred spirit to share our joys, and to sympathize with us in our sorrows, we must, we cannot but sorrow; and sorrowing after a godly manner is not unbecoming the Christian.

MAY 9.

" A cloud lay cradled near the setting sun,
A gleam of crimson ting'd its braided snow ;
Long had I watch'd the glory moving on,
O'er the still radiance of the lake below :
Ev'n in its very motion there was rest,
While every breath of eve that chanc'd to blow,
Wafted the trav'ller to the bounteous west,
Emblem, methought, of the departed soul,
To whose white robe the gleam of bliss is giv'n,
And by the breath of mercy made to roll
Right onward to the golden gates of heav'n ;
Where to the eye of faith it peaceful lies,
And tells to man his glorious destinies."

MANY a time has the subject of the above lines caught my attention, fixed my gaze, and filled my soul with something like a realizing sense of heavenly objects and divine things as they are found in a better world. Such a beauteous object brought into contrast with a dreary, stormy, wintry sky, is some faint emblem of the glory of heaven, as distinct from, and surpassing the poor and distressing state of this earth ; it is an emblem of the beauty and brightness of a redeemed child of Adam, when made a perfect spirit in heaven. And oh what a contrast is this to its state of darkness and humiliation when on earth ? but, after all, this beautiful emblem falls infinitely short of that wonderful, that eternal contrast which an exceeding weight of glory in heaven must be when compared to the state and condition of man below. Oh, thou God of all grace and of all glory, may I look every day with an eye of faith to those future, those unfading glories that remain to be revealed, and thus find my soul carried above these sad and cheerless things, which but too often darken my present sky, and distress the heart.

MAY 10.

"Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him."
Psalm ii. 12

In the dispensations of providence it hath pleased God so to cast the lot of most of the human race, that they should be compelled, as it were, to put their trust in him. They have no landed or funded property, no government pensions, no wealthy relatives to supply them, no benefactors to bequeath them legacies; in short, they have nothing of what the world calls "a certain income." It is to the daily blessing of the Almighty on their daily labours, their little business, or manual exertions that they have to look for the bread they themselves shall need, and for that which is necessary for their children and families. Now, here is a wide door opened for anxieties, for doubts, and fears, to rush like a torrent into the heart; and especially so, when sickness, or a want of employ, or a falling off in business takes place. And here also is a wide field for the display of the care and bountiful goodness of a promise-making and promise-fulfilling God. How many an evening has heard the song of praise and thanksgiving from thousands who have, through the day, experienced that it is good to trust in the Lord. The morning found them laden with apprehensions of want of food, or of employ, or of necessary assistance; but behold, ere the night shut in on them, they have received more than they could expect. Their prayer has been heard and clearly answered, their temporal necessities have been regarded by him, who has the hearts of all men in his hands, and their souls have been refreshed and their hearts made glad in the experience of this sweet word, "Blessed are all they that put their trust in thee."

MAY 11.

" Blessed are all they that put their trust in thee "
Psalm ii. 12.

If it be good to live a life of faith and trust in the promises of a kind and gracious God for the provisions necessary to the support of the body, it most surely is good to trust him, and to live a life of faith for a supply of every necessary and every promised grace and blessing for the soul! Lord, my wants, in these respects are manifold, and such as must be supplied, or I shall perish for ever; and they are such as no man on earth, such as no angel in heaven can supply. But thou canst more than answer all my needs. With thee is the fulness of life, of peace, of every good and perfect gift; with thee is plenteous redemption, even the forgiveness of sin; and with thee also is the fulness of the Spirit for the comfort and sanctification of thy praying and waiting children. Thou art also the author and finisher of faith; and in addition to all this, thou art more ready to hear than we are to pray; and thou hast assured us, that thou wilt be unto us " a sun and a shield—that thou wilt give grace and glory, and withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly?" Nay, that thou wilt guide them by thy counsel, and after that receive them to glory. All this will certainly be the portion of every humble, penitent, praying, believing soul; and thus it will ever be an unshaken truth, that, " Blessed are all those who put their trust in thee." O that I may do it more every day, under all the changes and trials of this wilderness state, even until I arrive in that kingdom where hope is lost in fruition, prayer is changed into praise, and faith is swallowed up in sight.

MAY 12.

"*Fear not, for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God.*"—Isaiah xli. 10

How frequently and how graciously do such encouragements and promises as the above meet us in the divine word! Lord, thou knowest that there is a necessity for all these displays of thy goodness and tender mercy; for many are the afflictions of thy children; and it is in bringing home such portions as these with power to their hearts, that thou dost deliver them out of so many of their troubles. Oh, thou ever blessed Triune God, if thou art indeed with us as our reconciled God; if the atoning blood of the Lamb be sprinkled on our consciences, and the regenerating grace of the Holy Ghost lays hold of our hearts, then we need not fear, although causes for dismay abound within and without us. Lord, help us in every time of need; help us to take thy promises home to our hearts in all their preciousness and power. Let us experience them as our portion and inheritance, and live on them in the house of our pilgrimage as the bread which is sent down from heaven. Many, O Lord, are the infirmities of the best of thy children—many are their dangers, their temptations, and trials, in body and in mind; but thy grace is sufficient to save and deliver; nay, it is sufficient to produce good out of all their real or seeming evils. O, my gracious Redeemer,

"Let me but hear thy dying voice
Pronounce forgiveness in my heart;
In every trial I'll rejoice——
This throbbing bosom shall find rest,
Amidst its woes."

MAY 13.

"*Lo, the winter is past.*"—Song of Solomon ii. 11.

How beauteous, how cheering, how lovely is the season now becoming! Under the bright rays of a returning sun our spirits become buoyant; and amidst the wide-spreading charms of the vegetable kingdom all creation puts on an universal smile of gladness, all is springing into renewed life, so that we are hardly able to realize the dreariness, the cold, and solitude that lately reigned on every side. The change is wonderful, it is universal; and it is every way lovely in itself, beneficent to man, and declaratory of the goodness and tender mercy of our heavenly Father. But what is all this, when compared to that happy and everlastingly increasing change which is to be experienced by the redeemed soul, when liberated from a body of sin and death, and removed from a world which, in a spiritual sense, is wrapt in winter, even in mid-winter all the year through? Lord, I have seen thy works to-day, and they all praise thee. I have gazed on the innumerable beauties of this lower creation, and behold, all is very good! But even this makes me long for that which is still better: yes, I desire, and long for a better country, even a heavenly one; where he that sits on the throne makes all things new; a country where there shall be no more winter, either spiritual or natural, nor any more night, nor light of the sun; but where the Lord God will himself give light to his children, and they shall reign with him for ever and ever.

MAY 14.

They that are whole have no need of a physician, but they that are sick."—Mark ii. 17.

And so long as a sin-stupified soul is sleeping and dreaming away its existence in the captivity and service of the great deceiver, there is neither a wish nor a want felt for the blessing of spiritual medicines or a heavenly physician. But go to the same individual when the grace of God has awaked him from his slumbers, from his dreams and delusions, and has convinced him of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and you will find him ready to give a whole world, had he such to part with, that his soul might be saved. And now, as he daily discovers more and more of the deep-rooted and deadly nature of his malady, he is, perhaps, greatly tempted to despair of all help, and much more of a sound and lasting cure. Yet these things are held out to all who desire them, namely, pardon and sanctification, divine guidance, and all the graces of faith, hope, and love. All these things are with Jesus, the Redeemer and the Healer of the souls of men; and those who feel most deeply, and lament most sincerely their natural and acquired spiritual maladies, are the very persons he will show himself most gracious and merciful to. God and Saviour, I come to thee at the close of another day; and as thou knowest my case altogether, and what is best at all times to correct and improve it, I would beseech thee to prescribe for me in thine infinite wisdom, and according to the abundance of thy mercies to do away all my offences, to heal all my diseases, to pardon all my daily sins, and to make me fit for the kingdom of heaven.

MAY 15.

"Praise ye the Lord. I will praise the Lord with my whole heart."—Psalm cxi. 1.

THAT this delightful exercise of praise constitutes the principal features in the services of heaven, there can be no doubt. Wants and necessities, doubts and fears, sorrows and sins, sickness and death, with every description and degree of evil, are there unknown, and every joy is possessed which the inhabitants can partake of; hence their prayers are exchanged for praise, as their faith is for sight. But it is as much our duty as it is our privilege, while on earth, to praise the Lord at all times, to praise him with our whole heart. Good Mr. Baxter, in his Saints' Rest, has some striking remarks and exhortations on this subject. "I entreat thee, reader," he says, "I entreat thee, remember this, let praise have a larger room in thy duties; keep matter ready at hand to feed thy praise, as well as matter for confession and petition. To this end, study the excellencies and goodness of the Lord, as frequently as thine own wants and unworthiness; the mercies which thou hast received and those that are promised, as often as the sins thou hast committed. O, the sinful folly of many of the saints, who drench their spirits in continual sadness, and waste their day in complaints, and so make themselves, both in body and in mind, unfit for this sweet and heavenly work! Instead of joining with the people of God in his praises, they are questioning their worthiness, and studying their miseries, and so rob God of his glory, and themselves of their consolation." Holy and blessed God! fit and prepare me for that kingdom where I shall be able "perfectly to love thee, and worthily to praise thy holy name for ever and ever." Amen.

MAY 16.

"A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, until he send forth judgment unto victory."
Matt. xii. 20.

The children of God are sometimes designated "Cedars of Lebanon," and sometimes "trees of the Lord's right hand planting," but here they are represented by a "broken reed," and by "smoking flax." What emblems of weakness are these! A reed is at best a very frail thing, and a "bruised reed" will be broken by the smallest weight, or the slightest breeze. So with a thread of lighted flax, which contains only sufficient fire to emit a little smoke, how soon, how easily, would even the foot of the grasshopper extinguish and quench it for ever!

Poor child of Adam, if these things represent thee, how wilt thou brave all the storms and furious blasts of the terrible one, when they fall on thee as the storm upon the wall? How will the little spark of spiritual fire which, within thee, is as the almost extinguished flax, continue to burn, when the power and foot of the enemy are at hand to quench it? Only in the strength of the mighty God of Jacob canst thou be preserved from breaking down; only beneath the wings of the Lord Jehovah Jesus canst thou be sheltered, and thy almost extinguished grace be fanned up into a holy and brilliant flame. Well, be not overmuch cast down. Help is laid on one that is almighty. Thy weakness will but make room for the display of his strength, and through the Lord Jesus thou shalt be more than conqueror.

"In life his grace shall strength supply,
Proportioned to thy day;
At death thou still shalt find him nigh
To wipe thy tears away."

MAY 17.

"Moses was a stranger in the land of Midian."—Acts vii. 29.

AND just such a stranger is every real, spiritually-minded child of God in this world. "Lord, what interest hath this empty world in me; and what is there in it that may seem so lovely as to entice my desires from my God, or make me loth to come away? Methinks, when I look upon it with a deliberate eye, it is a howling wilderness, and too many of its inhabitants are untamed monsters. O, let not this flesh so seduce my soul as to make me prefer this weary life before the joys that are about thy throne! And though death itself be unwelcome to nature, yet let thy grace make thy glory appear to me so desirable, that the king of terrors may be the messenger of my joy. Let not my soul be ejected by violence, and dispossessed of its habitation against its will; but draw it to thyself by the secret power of thy love, as the sunshine of these lovely spring-days draws forth the creatures from their winter cells; meet it half way, and entice it to thee, as the loadstone doth the iron, and as the greater flame attracts the less. Dispel, therefore, the clouds that hide thy love from me, for the foretastes of thy great salvation, and nothing else, can make a soul unfeignedly say, 'Now let thy servant depart in peace!' But it is not thy ordinary discoveries that will here suffice: as the work is greater, so must thy helps be. If I have any more time to spend on earth, let me live as without the world in thee, as I have sometimes lived as without thee in the world. While I have a thought to think, let me not forget thee; or a tongue to move, let me mention thee with delight, for the sake of Jesus Christ." *(Baxter.)*

MAY 18.

"*The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.*"—Ps. xxxiii. 5.

THE beauties and the bounties of a returning spring, and all the luxuriant increase of the earth, do on every side proclaim the truth of these words. "Oh how delightful it is to behold and study these inferior works of creation! What a beautiful fabric do we here dwell in; the floor is so dressed with herbs, and flowers, and trees, and watered with springs and rivers; the roof so widely expanded, so admirably adorned! What wonders do sun, moon, and stars, seas, and winds contain! And hath God prepared such a home for contemptible flesh, for a soul imprisoned; and doth he bestow so many millions of wonders upon his enemies? O, what a dwelling place must that be which he prepares for his dearly beloved children; and how will the glory of the new Jerusalem exceed all the present glory of the creature! Arise, then, O my soul, in thy contemplations, and let thy thoughts of that glory as far exceed in sweetness thy thoughts of the excellencies below! Fear not to go out of this body, and this world, when thou must make so happy a change; but say, as one of old did, when he was dying, 'I am glad, and even leap for joy, that the time is come in which that mighty Jehovah, whose majesty, in my search of nature I have admired, whose goodness I have adored, whom by faith I have desired and panted after, will now show himself to me face to face.'" (*Baxter.*)—In these contemplations, and in these hopes, these views, and these anticipations of the glory and perfect felicity of the kingdom of heaven, let me close my eyes to-night, anxious only to be found with the Lord, whether it be in this world or in the next.

MAY 19.

"*And Jesus said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?*"—Mark x. 51.

LORD, art thou not, as it were, calling me daily and hourly to thy footstool, and saying to me, as thou didst to poor Bartimeus, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" In all solemnity, and in all deliberation over my own wants and desires, I will answer thy gracious question by saying,—Lord, make and keep me thine, and thine only, and for ever. As a sinner by nature and by practice I want and desire a daily pardon and sanctification. I would have every faculty of the soul renewed. I would desire every thing thou lovest, and abhor every thing thou hatest. I would have thy whole law written in my heart—my every affection sanctified and spiritualized—my will entirely lost in thine. I would stand complete and clothed in the imputed righteousness and merits of Christ Jesus, and be made meet for his kingdom by the imparted and unwrought sanctification of the Holy Ghost. Lord, let me live to thee and for thee while I am on earth; and let me die to thee and for thy glory when I depart hence. Oh, let me live, and love, and praise, and serve thee in thy kingdom of righteousness and peace for ever and ever. Amen. Be not angry with thy servant, O Lord, for presuming to ask and express such great things. I know that the least of them surpasses in value the whole material universe, but they are such things as I absolutely stand in need of; and, moreover, they are such things as thou hast promised to grant. Lord, be it unto thy servant according to thy word.

MAY 20.

"*There remaineth a rest to the people of God.*"—Heb. iv. 9.

AGAIN, and again, O my soul, endeavour to rouse thee to the consideration of this unspeakably precious and important subject. "Lord, thou hast reserved my perfect joys for heaven; therefore, help me to desire till I may possess, and let me long when I cannot, as I would rejoice. O, my soul, thou knowest to thy sorrow, that thou art not yet at thy rest. When shall I arrive at the safe and quiet harbour, where there are none of these storms, waves, and dangers; when I shall never more have a weary, restless night or day! When my life shall not be such a mixture of hope and fear, of joy and sorrow; nor shall flesh and spirit be combating within me; nor faith and unbelief, humility and pride, maintain a continual conflict. O, when shall I be past these soul-tormenting fears, and cares, and griefs? When shall I be out of this soul-distracting, ensnaring, deceitful flesh; this corruptible body, this vain, vexatious world? Alas! that I must stand and see the church and cause of Christ tossed about in contention, and made subservient to private interest, or deluded fancies! There is none of this disorder in the heavenly Jerusalem; there I shall find a harmonious concert of perfect spirits, obeying and praising their everlasting King. O, how much better to be a door-keeper there, than the commander of this tumultuous world!" *(Baxter.)*—Up, then, my soul, and press forward to the end of thy journey; and at every fresh difficulty look unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith; and under every present toil and distress, call to mind this delightful truth, "there remaineth a rest to the people of God."

MAY 21.

"Without me ye can do nothing."—John xv. 5.

How important a truth is this ever to be present in our thoughts and convictions. Left to ourselves, we shall do no good, no acceptable thing, nor shall we avoid any that is evil. Such is the perverted and fallen nature of the human heart, that it can turn every thing into an occasion of injury to itself. Without the abiding grace of God, "poverty becomes a burden, riches a snare, sickness unpleasing. If we are applauded, this very approbation proves the most contagious breath; if we are vilified, or unkindly used, it fills us with tempers altogether contrary to the mind of Christ." Whether we read, or hear, or pray, in public worship or in private devotions, yet of ourselves we can reap no benefit. If the Saviour do not fix our attention, influence our minds, sanctify our hearts, and enlighten our understandings, all will be profitable for nothing. And certainly, when called forth to contend with the snares and corruptions of the world, when assaulted by the prince of the power of the air, when our hearts are more or less disposed to fall in with these enemies of our salvation, there can be no hope, no possibility of escaping destruction, but as the Lord works in us both to will and to do; and as his power and grace save us from ourselves, from the world, and from the devil. Lord, I bless thee for warning and instructing me in these things which so much concern my everlasting peace. May my soul, by day and by night, be kept watchful unto prayer; and may an abiding sense of my own weakness lead me continually to thee for strength and grace to help in every time of need.

MAY 22.

"*Behold I come quickly.*"—Rev. xxii. 7.

YES, in the dispensations of Providence, and in the displays of many singular judgments and mercies, the Lord Jesus was about to come and commence a series of events that should go on even unto the end of the world, and which should bring to pass all the solemn things shadowed out in the visions and revelations made to his servant John. But, behold this same Lord will come quickly to every individual of his believing and loving children in the visitation of death, to remove their souls into his own presence; to consign their bodies to their mother earth for an appointed time; to separate them from all their earthly and natural ties, and to introduce them to scenes and relationships such as bind angels and saints together for ever. Behold, the Lord Jesus comes quickly to take away the dark glass through which his children now see so imperfectly, and to enable them to see face to face; to call them from the society of imperfect saints below to that of spirits made perfect above; to silence their poor and languid songs on earth, and enable them to sing that new song in heaven which no inhabitant of our earth can now understand; to put an end to doubts, and fears, and prayers; and to fill them with joy unspeakable and praises eternal. He comes to lead them to living fountains of water, and to wipe all tears from their eyes; to gather them around his own throne, and to dwell himself among them; and, through an eternity of change, to ripen them in glory from one degree to another, ever making them more like unto himself. Even so, come Lord Jesus.

MAY 23.

"*The time is at hand.*"—Rev. xxii. 10.

Every hour brings its allotted dispensations of providence and of grace, of mercy, and of judgment, and all are tending to the consummation of the divine plans, which will all be finished on that day when the Lord shall judge the world in righteousness by Jesus Christ. Oh, poor unhappy sinners, ye who scorn the Lord's counsel, and will reverence none of his reproof, the time is at hand when he will come, and by death put an end for ever to all your pomps and vanities, and sinful lusts of the flesh; to all your revellings, and banquetings, and chamberings, and sinful mirth; to all your intemperate eatings and drinkings, and making merry; to all your lording it over others, to all your fair pretences and hypocritical professions; to all your vain expectations of escaping a future judgment; to all your unscriptural hopes of obtaining heaven. The time for your departure is at hand, and none can reverse it; none can retain you here, none can go with and comfort, or save you—ye must die; nay, ye will be hurried away in your wickedness; and as death leaves you, so judgment will find and deal with you. Holy and ever-blessed God, may I be kept in such a state, that at thy coming I may be where and what thou wouldst have me to be found. I would not dictate to thee as to the time, or manner, or place when, and how, and where I would die; only with one exception, let it be in thy faith and love, to be for ever with thee. Should it seem good in thy sight, I should prefer, greatly prefer, to be enabled to glorify thee with my last words and recollections in the body, but still I would say, not my will, but thine be done.

MAY 24.

"*Put ye on the Lord Jesus.*"—Rom. xiii. 14.

This is a figurative expression, signifying our interest in Christ Jesus, our union with him, and our conformity to his image. First, we must put on the Lord Jesus as our *wisdom* for the illumination of the soul. He is the true light which enlighteneth every man that is saved; as he opened the eyes of the blind, while he was on earth, so he now must open the eyes of our understanding. Christ Jesus, through the teaching of the Holy Ghost, must lead us into all saving and necessary truth. He it is who makes wise unto salvation by giving faith. It is by him that men know the truth, and that the truth makes them free; so that although they may be simple-minded, unlearned, and of small skill in other matters, they obtain that wisdom which is held in highest honour in heaven. Being guided, led, and taught by this Holy Spirit, they shall discover and feed on all the most precious and blessed doctrines, and promises of God's word. Oh, thou that hast the residue of the Spirit ever at hand to bestow in rich effusions on all who earnestly long and pray for the blessing, grant thy servant much and increasing union and communion with thyself. Let me be clothed in, and instructed by, that spirit which thou hast promised in answer to prayer. Oh, incline and enable me to walk through the day in thy light as its hours pass over my head; and when natural darkness brings night to the world and to my bodily sight, may the Sun of Righteousness shine brightly on my soul; and in that light may I close my eyes to sleep, and in that light awake up to see another day on earth, or to enter into the saint's everlasting day in heaven.

MAY 25.

"*Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.*"—Coloss. iii. 2.

To the spiritually minded Christian, the men of this world, and the objects of their earnest pursuit are indeed subjects of pity. "It is the duty and privilege of the believer to have before his eyes the image of this world vanishing and passing away; and to have the other, with all its everlasting affairs and concernments, as even now ready to be unfolded, to take place, and to fill up all the stage. The Christian will do well, often to represent to himself the vision of this world dissolving—of its thrones tumbling—of its monarchies and kingdoms breaking up—of its crowns and sceptres lying as neglected things.

"Faith is a telescope, through which we can behold the appearance of the Supreme Judge; the solemn state of his majestic person; the splendid pomp of his innumerable attendants; the glorious throng of angels and archangels doing homage to their eternal King. Faith sees the royal guards sent forth into the four corners of the earth to gather his elect together. It hears the trumpet whose sound awakes the dead; shakes the foundation of the earth; opens the graves; and commands the sea to give up its dead. It sees the Judge descend; the world on fire; the elements melting with fervent heat; the universe dissolved; passed away and gone; the books opened; the sentence pronounced; the righteous saved, and the sinner condemned. It beholds heaven possessed by one party, and hell peopled by the other." With these pictures before my mind how supremely trifling are all things below; how important all things above!

MAY 26.

"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
Matt. xvi. 26.

A DUE consideration of the value of the soul lies at the bottom of all just conceptions of religion. "The worth of an immortal soul—where shall we begin, and where shall we conclude? The subject is so expansive, that no finite mind can traverse it; so sublime, that no human tongue can do it justice. Let us look into ourselves, let us explore our own spirit, let us attempt to span its dimensions, and weigh it in the balances of revelation. What do we discover of its nature, its properties, and destiny? It is divine in its origin, radiant aforetime with the similitude of Deity, capacitated for the fruition of God, majestic though in ruins, retaining awful vestiges of the divine likeness, endowed with indefinite capabilities of knowledge, endued with an unfathomable susceptibility of anguish, possessed of a no less unfathomable susceptibility of enjoyment; and, beyond all, and above all, having interwoven with its very essence the dread and inconceivable attribute of immortality. Can we think of it without amazement, or contemplate it without awe? Then let it be realized that such a soul lies entombed in every heart, and especially within our own, and within those over whom we have any moral influence or controul—a soul so costly, that no finite arithmetical calculations can compute its value; a soul which far outweighs every unintelligent object, the most magnificent, the most stupendous that creation can supply." *(Stowell.)* These, however great and mighty, as portions of unconscious matter, are destined to change and to passing away; but the soul is everlastingly the same. Oh, what shall it profit a man by gaining the whole world; if, in obtaining this perishing good, he loses his own soul?

MAY 27.

"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me?"—Psalm xlii. 11.

On how many occasions has the heaven-bound traveller expressed the feeling of a sorrowful heart, and expostulated with his soul in these words of the Psalmist! Some individuals are undoubtedly more cast down than others; but there are so many bodily infirmities and so many temporal anxieties, and so many spiritual conflicts, that the heart cannot be long free from sadness. Whenever this is the case, we cannot do better than imitate the Psalmist in reasoning over the matter with our own souls. Not that we can fly beyond the reach of our trials, but in general we shall find that they are more felt and more feared than they ought to be. We, in fact, look too much at the dark side of the cloud—we forget the many great and precious promises which our heavenly Father has scattered along our path, that at every turning, and at every new disaster, we through patience and comfort of these might have hope. Especially we are tempted, under every renewed affliction of mind, to fear that peace and joy will never again return. We seem to lose our hope in God, and all our expectation of again praising him with joyful lips. O, may we henceforth exercise more faith and courage under every distress, and may the Holy Ghost the Comforter bring home the scriptures of truth with power to the heart: then,

"Hope's bright lamp her light shall borrow
From the gospel's blessed ray;
And from many a coming morrow,
Chase the clouds of grief away."

MAY 28.

"What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
Matt. xvi. 26.

Let us again turn to the consideration of this overwhelming and all-important subject. It has been observed, that there is nothing in all the mere material and unconscious range of the works of creation that equals the soul of one poor, obscure child of Adam in value. "Shall we take the sun shining in his strength, and filling the heavens with his splendour? Shall we balance him against the most humiliated of human souls? Weigh both in the balances of eternal truth, and which is the most momentous? Yonder sun has no consciousness of his own existence—knows not his origin or his destiny; neither is the period remote when his glories shall be quenched, and himself have passed away like the morning vapours which he now exhales from the face of the firmament. But the most humble soul which we can poise against the lamp of heaven has a consciousness of his own existence; has faculties, which, if developed to their perfection, might approximate, yea, equalize to the angels of God; it has a being which shall survive the existence of the sun, and, amidst the dissolution of the visible universe, shall stand forth in all its indestructibility, even then only commencing a career interminable as His, who inhabiteth eternity."—*(Stowell.)* May we lie down to rest for the night, and rise up to begin every new day under the mighty influence of this recollection, that we are creatures born to live for ever, and that an eternity of inexpressible remorse and despair, or of unspeakable happiness and glory awaits us, just as we are found in Christ Jesus, or not found in him.

MAY 29.

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."
Matt. vi. 33.

And why all this intense earnestness to secure the salvation of the soul? Because, if lost, its calamity is beyond expression; and if saved, its blessedness is beyond all present conception. "What human mind can comprehend the joy of which the soul must be susceptible, if perfected in all its powers, and filled with all the fulness of God? But such will be the inheritance of the saints in light. Glorious things are spoken of the portion which awaits them. We are told of a city which hath foundations, whose streets are gold, whose walls are jasper, and whose gates are pearl; we are told of the rivers of the water of life, which flow inexhaustibly throughout its borders, while along the banks the trees of life bend beneath immortal fruit; we are told, that the inhabitants shall never say, 'I am sick;' there shall be no more night, and no more death; sorrow and crying shall flee away, and God himself will wipe away tears from off all faces: we are told that the mortal shall put on immortality; the corruptible, incorruption; and death be swallowed up in victory: we are told that the city hath no need of the sun to give her light by day, or of the moon by night, for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne is the light thereof, and her God her glory: we are told of the harps of sweetness, and palms of victory, and robes of whiteness, and crowns of glory, and songs of ceaseless rapture, and pleasures for evermore, and fulness of joy: yet, after all, we are assured, that it doth not yet appear what we shall be; that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."—*(Stowell)*

MAY 30.

"*The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup.*"
Psalm xvi. 5.

WHATEVER the Lord may give his children as their earthly portion, and however thankfully they may enjoy the same, yet it is himself that he gives as the crowning blessing, and it is the enjoyment of his comforting Spirit now, and the prospect of beholding his visible presence and of enjoying his kingdom and glory hereafter, that lie nearest their heart. Nothing short of a well-grounded hope that the Lord is our God—our reconciled Father in Christ Jesus—will satisfy the regenerate heart. This is indeed the state of mind that fits men for the enjoyment of his kingdom—it is that state of soul that makes us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. "Though the flesh will be pleading for its own delights, and the world will be creeping into our affections; yet in our ordinary, settled, prevailing judgment and affections, we shall prefer God before all things in the world. We shall make him the very end of our endeavours and desires. The very reason why we hear, and pray, and desire to live on earth, is chiefly this, that we may seek the Lord and make sure of him as our everlasting portion. If God would set before us an eternity of earthly pleasures on one hand, and his presence and kingdom on the other, and bid us take our choice, we should refuse the world and choose himself as the portion of our inheritance, and of our cup." Lord, grant that as I continue to draw nearer to my end, I may feel more and more assured that thou art my portion for ever.

MAY 31.

"*O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.*"—Deut. xxxii. 29.

WHEREVER this is neglected all other anxieties and considerations are but as walking in a vain shadow and disquieting ourselves in vain. To know our day of merciful visitation; to know the value of means of grace; to seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness; to know the only true God and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, this is true wisdom; to know these things experimentally and in the heart, is life eternal. Blessed be the God of all grace, that there are many who are thus wise unto salvation, who have little knowledge of any thing else beyond what is necessary to conduct their own little affairs and domestic duties. And all who are thus wise, whether learned or unlearned in the wisdom of the schools, do consider their latter end. They do frequently and solemnly meditate on that day which is to be the last in their calendar; they endeavour to place themselves in the situation of a dying man, and to bring those circumstances before their eyes which, ere long, will certainly overtake them. This is true wisdom; this is absolutely necessary if we would, through grace, meet that hour with composure and safety—that overwhelmingly important hour which separates us from all that pains or pleases us below—the hour which introduces us within the vail, and places us in the immediate presence of him who will at once pronounce a sentence of eternal and inconceivable joy, or of everlasting and unutterable woe. Lord, give me grace to make my calling and election sure, that I may be found ready at thy call to enter into the joy of my Lord.

JUNE 1.

"*He is altogether lovely.*"—Solomon's Song, v. 16.

HERE the church is speaking of Christ, and the church is the spouse and Christ is the bridegroom. But every soul that has been renewed and instructed by the Holy Ghost can take up the same language. O Lord, may it indeed be so with us until we can say with truth, "Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none on earth that I desire in comparison of thee." First, then, let us contemplate the Lord Jesus as the *Prophet* of his church, the teacher of his people. When on earth he spake as never man spake. There was a wisdom and sublimity, a sweetness and plainness, an importance and grace in all his discourses and doctrines, which never were found in any other. Whether journeying by the way, resting at the well's mouth, sitting at his meals, or discoursing in the temple; whether addressing his disciples or the multitude; whether arguing with the learned doctors, or instructing the sons of Zebedee, there was a wisdom and grace that bespoke him the altogether lovely prophet; such as the world had never seen or heard before, and such as it never will behold again. O, thou blessed and Holy Spirit, whose office it is to render effectual the teaching and the preaching of Jesus, the great and altogether lovely prophet of his church and people, may thy rich influences of grace and wisdom rest upon my soul, and give me understanding to comprehend, and grace to feel the power of all his precious instructions and warnings, of all his encouragements and promises, until I appear among his redeemed and glorified children above.

JUNE 2.

"*He is altogether lovely.*"—Solomon's Song, v. 16.

THE Lord Jesus is altogether lovely in his character and office of a *Priest* atoning for the sins of his church and people. Other priests, though expressly appointed by God, were men of like passions and infirmities with others. But Christ Jesus was altogether undefiled and separate from sinners. They, as types and representatives of Christ, made atonement with the sacrifice and blood of animals; but Jesus Christ, by the one offering up of himself, once for all, hath made a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. He saw the breach between an offended God and an offending world as far too wide to admit of any peace-maker but himself, who, as God and man in one Christ, could offer an atonement of infinite value and dignity; and thus open a door of mercy whereby pardon might reach the offenders on one hand, and the honour of his Father's law be exalted on the other. Such were the tender and lovely feelings of this our great High Priest, that during the hours of his intense sufferings and agony on the cross, he could, and did, sympathize with his weeping mother, and pity and pardon the penitent malefactor, and pray for his very murderers, in these words, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." Oh God, my God, my Father, and my friend in Christ Jesus, may I close my eyes in faith, in hope, in peace, under a well-grounded confidence that I have redemption through his most precious blood; even the forgiveness of all my sins.

JUNE 3.

"*He is altogether lovely.*"—Solomon's Song, v. 16.

Not only does our blessed Redeemer sustain the office of *Prophet* and *Priest* for his church and people, and in these offices display himself as altogether lovely; but he sustains the character and office of *King* also, and in this he is altogether unlike any other being. His throne is a throne of love, and his sceptre that of mercy, while his government is that of infinite wisdom and justice. Neither folly, tyranny, ambition, or oppression ever did or will mix with his reign. Clouds and darkness are, indeed, sometimes round about his throne; but justice and truth, wisdom and mercy, are still the habitation of his seat. He never has given one command, or uttered one prohibition, but such as has carried with it present and future good to man. In all he permits and performs, in all he bestows and takes away, there is infinite wisdom and mercy running through the whole. He possesses none of the infirmities, partialities, or weaknesses of mortals; nor is the smallest portion of his universal empire, his moral and intellectual empire, for one moment lost sight of; and in and through all the conflicting elements in the natural and reasonable world, he makes all things work together for good to them that love him. In heaven and on earth he reigns the God of love—his plans and dispensations are all regulated by this blessed principle—and in returning him the services of love and gratitude, his people are increasingly happy for ever and ever.

JUNE 4.

"*He is altogether lovely.*"—Solomon's Song, v. 16.

When we contemplate the Redeemer's character and conduct while assuming human nature and dwelling on earth, we discover nothing but loveliness. How kind and compassionate was he to all in their afflictions, whether of mind, body, or estate! He sent none away uncomforted or unhealed. Did a poor leper draw near and say, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," Jesus immediately answered, "I will, be thou clean," and that instant he was made whole. When the sisters of Lazarus wept, our Lord wept with them. When the anxious mothers pressed through the crowd to present their infant children, and the disciples rebuked those that brought them, Jesus said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." When even a thoughtless and worldly-minded host of selfish men followed the Saviour into the wilderness, he had compassion on these multitudes and fed them ere he sent them away. To the poor, the ignorant, and erring, he was, as we have already seen, the most condescending, kind, and forbearing friend and instructor. To the lame, the halt, the blind, and the possessed, he was the ready and all-perfect physician. To the penitent and broken hearted he was the first to pardon all the past, and to encourage and cheer them for the future. To his enemies and blasphemers he was the most forgiving and patient of all injured and insulted beings. From the manger to the cross, and from the cross to his return into heaven, all he said and all he did was lovely. Lord, grant that my soul may with truth declare that this Saviour is my beloved and my friend.

JUNE 5.

"*He is altogether lovely.*"—Solomon's Song, v. 16.

The preciousness, the suitableness, and the loveliness of the Saviour, are inexhaustible subjects for comment and meditation. The heavens, it is true, have long ago received him out of the sight of mortals; but there he is altogether lovely in a degree utterly beyond our conception. Yes, the very same Jesus that died for our sins, and rose again for our justification, now liveth to make intercession for us. He is actually and incessantly employed in preparing us for the mansions of his glorious kingdom, and in preparing these mansions for us, if we are found among those who really love him. "Father," exclaimed he, "Father, I will that they whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory." Previous to this he had addressed his beloved, sorrowing disciples in these words: "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am ye may be also." Moreover, he also declared it to be his will, that "they might be one in him, as he was one with the Father." May such hopes, such promises, such prospects, ever be present to my mind, at once to set me above all the little ruffling crosses and trials of this life, and to stir up all the faculties of the soul, to seek nearer and sweeter communion with the "altogether lovely" Saviour while I am absent from him. And, Lord, hasten thy work to a completion in my soul; make me altogether what thou wouldest have me to be; that while I live I may live unto thee, and that when I die I may die unto thee, and be thine for ever and ever.

JUNE 6.

"*I remembered God, and was troubled.*"—Psalm lxxvii. 3.

This must be the case with every backslider, with every one who has brought reproach on the gospel, and with every soul who is overtaken by the propects of death, while unacquainted with the Saviour. And oh, how many souls are thus called to their sick and dying chambers, to think on that God they have lived in forgetfulness and neglect of for so many years! to think of Sabbaths lost and profaned, and of means of grace unimproved, and of the Scriptures unread, and of pious neighbours and christian ministers shunned, and perhaps ridiculed! Lord, keep thy servant from every thing that would lay the foundation for such troubles. Draw my soul, in all its powers and in all its faculties, nearer to thyself: let me, with the Psalmist of old, say, "My meditations on thee shall be sweet." Psalm civ. 34. Let me enjoy the soul-refreshing experience of peace with thee through our Lord Jesus Christ. Let me feel that I am justified by faith, and that I am so in Christ Jesus; that there is no condemnation lying at my door, but that, through thy rich grace resting on me, "I walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." It is delightful at any time to be able to think on thee as my reconciled God, to remember thy past mercies in my deliverances from the mire and the clay, and of thy setting my feet upon a rock, and putting a new song into my mouth; but how surpassingly delightful will it be to remember thee on a sick and dying bed in the confidence of hope, that soon I am to depart hence and to be for ever with thee!

JUNE 7.

" The Lord of Light, though veil'd awhile
He hides his noon-tide ray,
Shall soon in lovelier beauty smile,
To gild the closing day ;

" And, bursting through the dusky shroud
That dar'd his pow'r invest,
Ride thron'd in light o'er every cloud,
And guide you to his rest."

At a time when clouds and thick mental darkness are depressing the spirits, and the enfeebled frame and shattered nerves are greatly distressing the soul, and, as it were, almost dispossessing reason of her empire over the mind, how precious then are the truths here expressed. Lord, many of thy children are ofttimes thus oppressed; and thou knowest how much they need thy cheering, peace-restoring, and comforting presence! May it please thee, O thou God of consolation and of hope, to stand by us in these seasons, to mitigate the fury of the trial, and to sanctify it to thy glory and our souls' good, that when we are called to pass through the fire and the water, we may come forth much purified, and fitted for thy service. O, most blessed God! remember whereof thy children are made; consider, O Lord, that they are but dust, and suffer them not to be tried beyond what they are able to bear. In all their affliction, whether mental or bodily, whether spiritual or temporal, do thou stand by and succour them. Glorify thy grace in perfecting thy strength in their weakness, and thus delivering them from the mire and the clay; and may their feet be set upon a rock, their future goings ordered, and a new song of praise be put into their mouths, for Jesus Christ our Redeemer's sake.

JUNE 8.

"There is a world we have not seen,
Which time shall never dare destroy;
Where mortal footstep hath not been,
Nor ear hath caught its sounds of joy.

"There is a region, lovelier far
Than sages tell or poets sing,
Brighter than summer beauties are,
And softer than the tints of spring."

And it is with the realities of that world that every child of God has to do through all eternity. For a short season they are here, tossed about amidst contending trials and dangers, like a vessel tossed and driven amidst the conflicting waves of the sea; and when, for a short space, they seem to have gained some port of rest, and sit them down and begin to reckon on many joys to come, even then the harbinger of new sorrows is at hand. Death levels friend after friend, and sin ofttimes brings new distress into their own souls; and pains, and sickness, and a variety of afflictions, make them deeply feel that this is not their resting place. Well, amidst all these earthly conflicts, they are bidden to set their affections on things above; to have their heart and conversation in heaven, and to discourse with each other, and to comfort one another with the relation and the hope of shortly enjoying all the diversified glories and immortality of the kingdom of their Lord. Every beauty now adorning the natural world should raise our thoughts to more exalted conceptions of that God who created all things, and increase our desires after a kingdom whose beauties, as well as other perfections, much surpass all present comprehension; for,

"In vain the philosophic eye
May seek to view that fair abode,
Or find it in the curtain'd sky—
It is the dwelling-place of God."

JUNE 9.

" How sweetly parts the Christian's sun,
Just like the summer monarch set,
'Midst cloudless skies, his journey done,
To rise in brighter regions yet."

He who is at once the author of life and death, and the Redeemer of the soul of man, has, on many occasions, verified the above lines in the tranquil and happy exit of his believing and waiting children. It was so this day with my departed neighbour Mrs. A. and it has been so with many others of my flock, my friends, and acquaintance. Oh that it may anon be the case with myself. Lord, I cannot but desire such an experience, if consistent with thy holy will. I know that it is quite possible, and frequently the case, that souls depart to be for ever happy and blessed with thee, whose day of life was mostly beclouded; and, from a variety of circumstances, the very evening of whose earthly day was gloomy. A hundred things connected with the body and with its natural diseases may exclude light, and joy, and peace from the soul; and must, in various peculiar cases, do so, unless a miracle were wrought to prevent such consequences. But, again, I would pray for a tranquil, happy, hoping, believing death, such as I have witnessed in many of my dear departed flock—such as many of my once venerated and beloved friends, now in heaven, enjoyed when summoned to quit the earth. O death, where is then thy sting? Coming and finding thy victim in such a frame of mind as this, thy work is an act of wonderful mercy, and of high privilege to a poor body, suffering much pain, and to a soul hungering and thirsting to depart and be with Christ.

JUNE 10.

" Thou art, O God, the life and light
Of all this wondrous world we see:
Its glow by day, its smile by night,
Are but reflections caught from thee!
Where'er we turn, thy glories shine,
And all things fair and bright are thine."

" When day, with farewell beam, delays
Among the opening clouds of even,
And we can almost think we gaze
Through golden vistas into heaven,
Those hues that mark the sun's decline,
So soft, so radiant, Lord, are thine!"

And it is in thus viewing, and thus considering the works of creation, that man acts in character; that he enjoys what he looks upon; and that he honours him whose grace and glory shine forth in every part of his works. Let the mere sentimentalist, who rejects the Bible, expatiate ever so long and loudly; and let poets of infidel principles unite and sing in praise of the material beauties of our world, and of the grandeur of those worlds and systems that fill unlimited space, yet is all this but a cold and heartless theme, unless He who made, sustains, and animates, and beautifies, the whole is not seen, acknowledged, and felt in all. Lord, what is a beautiful landscape, if it leads us not to admire thee? What are the myriads of suns and systems that stud the skies, if contemplated apart from thee their Maker? What are beauteous morning, and enchanting evening, and splendid midsummer days, and calm, refreshing, undarkened night, if the soul does not remember, and live to thee through them all in enlarged gratitude and love? Blessed Jesus, these are thy works, and I would enjoy them only as they are displays of thy grace and glory.

JUNE 11.

"*The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*"—Habak. ii. 14.

THIS positive declaration admits of no doubt, it must and will be accomplished, for the Lord hath said it! But how little does this world, in its present state, seem likely to become thus wise and happy! What an awful mass of brutality, lust, licentiousness, ignorance, superstition, and idolatry has it hitherto exhibited! Up to this day by far the greater part of all the nations of the earth are sunk into a state of such vileness, such enmity against, and ignorance of God, and are so deeply, so lamentably debased, that the Lord only can form a just conception of the degradation and iniquity of the human race. And among those who are called Christians, how rarely do we find men possessed of any knowledge of the glory of the Lord! A few scanty and vague notions of the existence of a Divine Being, and of the Son of God coming into the world, constitute all that tens of thousands of Christians, so called, know! As the Lord our righteousness, wisdom, sanctification, and redemption; as a God of creation and Providence, reigning and ruling in heaven and on earth; and as a covenant God, living, reigning, and ruling in the hearts of his redeemed children as his own living temples; in all these respects he is not known; his power, his grace, his wisdom, his love, are not found or felt, but by very, very few. What a change must then pass on the world! How bright, how blessed, how holy, how happy, must this earth become when every heart shall be filled with love, and every tongue be employed in praise. Lord, hasten the time for Jesus Christ's sake.

JUNE 12.

" Rivers to the ocean run,
Nor stay in all their course;
Fire ascending seeks the sun:
Both speed them to their source.

So a soul that's born of God,
Pants to view his glorious face;
Upwards tends to his abode,
To rest in his embrace."

To be carnally-minded is a prelude to eternal death; and to be spiritually-minded is not only life and peace now, but an evidence that we are born again; and that our Lord is fitting us for that kingdom whither he himself is gone before, and into which he has said he will bring all his people in their appointed time. And now, my soul, whither are thy first, thy most fervent desires tending? Are they rising heavenward to him who is the Sun of Righteousness, and the author and giver of all grace? Are they flowing onward to that ocean of felicity, that boundless, blessed world of pure delights, where saints and angels are ever employed in serving, praising, loving, and beholding Him who sitteth on the throne? Most certainly this will be thy case, if thou art born again of the Spirit, and become a new creature. With these desires thou wilt close the day; and with these desires thou wilt greet the returning light of another morning, should another day be allotted thee on earth; and with these desires thou wilt pass through all the cares and comforts that the day may bring with it. Many things must and will, for a time, occupy thy thoughts and attention connected with this life and with its concerns; but the stream of thy best affections will flow on towards heaven as the rivers to the ocean; and the best desires of thine heart will ascend to Jesus as the fire ascends towards the sun. Is it so, or not?

JUNE 13.

"*And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountains of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho.*"—Deut. xxxiv. 1.

And from this commanding spot, and with a vision made supernaturally strong, the Lord showed him the land which he sware unto Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, saying, "I will give it unto thy seed." But Moses was not permitted to go thither himself; he died in the land of Moab; partly on account of his trespassing against the Lord among the children of Israel, at the waters of Meribah Kadesh, (Numb. xx. 10.) and partly as being himself typical of the law, which cannot save the soul, or lead it into the heavenly Canaan. Moses was enabled to look from the top of Pisgah over the river Jordan, into the outspread beauties and richness of the land of promise. This was very refreshing; but he was also enabled to do much more, even to look, by faith, over the river of death into the glories and unspeakable blessings of the heavenly Canaan. Happy Moses! this made his soul rejoice. His journeyings, and toils, and griefs, and temptations, were about to close for ever; and shortly he was to be with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, inheriting the promises, and beholding his Redeemer face to face. May it be so with us. It is true, that faith in the word of God is our warrant of trust, and not our feelings. But who would not, in the hour of death, desire to feel assured of heaven? to stand on Pisgah, and look by faith, and rejoice under the feelings and inward witness of the Holy Ghost, that the Jordan, whose waters already have reached his feet, will only waft him on into that good world where all the departed race of Adam have gone, who loved and longed to be with Christ.

JUNE 14.

" A shadow moving by one's side,
That would a substance seem,
That is, yet is not, though descried
Like skies beneath the stream :
A tree that's ever in the bloom,
Whose fruit is never ripe ;
A wish for joys that never come—
Such are the hopes of life."

THIS is a sad and melancholy theme for those whose hearts and affections are set on things below! It is a truth they wish to overlook, but cannot always avoid; for though deep conviction of its reality will at times come over them, it is to the Christian, and to him only, that this world presents any thing deserving the name of enjoyment; and it is so to him because he enjoys the Redeemer in it, and in all it brings to his hands or presents to his eyes. As to those hopes of life which the children of the world form, they are all visionary, unscriptural, and of course full of disappointment. They look for and expect a satisfying portion amidst shadows, changes, and death, and not finding what they expected, they are sullen with discontent against God and man. But the world, used and viewed as holy writ instructs us to do, will yield, on many occasions, the fruits of profit to the soul, and of delight to the senses; nay, it will afford us refreshments by the way, while all its imperfections and unsatisfying things will endear to our hearts that world to which we are journeying. Were the hopes and enjoyments of this life more bright, more real, or more complete than they are now found to be, they would only serve to retard our progress to that which is to come. Human life is a life of discipline and preparation for eternal life: it is not our rest, it is not our home; but it has many mercies and blessings to offer those whose hearts and treasures are in heaven.

JUNE 15.

"*Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God hath led thee.*—Deut. viii. 2.

THIS is a most suitable exercise wherewith to close every day of our lives. How he has preserved us from dangers, calamities, and distresses that thousands of others have suffered under. How he has provided for our wants, and perhaps poured many indulgences into our lap. It may be that the day has led us by a rough and thorny path, and that troubles and afflictions have overtaken us since the morning. In all these we shall act wisely to remember that the Lord does nothing in vain, and that in the case of those who love and desire to serve him, he has a voice of mercy in every event, and that these very trials, when understood by us, will prove so many blessings in disguise. Should the day have brought ease to a pained body, or comfort to a troubled spirit, then it will be at once a duty and a delight to remember such mercies, and to close our eyes with thanksgivings in our hearts, and praises on our tongues. Should faith and hope have gained a little additional strength, and carried the soul a little way heavenward in high and holy longings and anticipations after that rest which remains for the people of God; here also it becomes our duty, and will conduce much to our delight, to call the whole to remembrance. In short, all the events of the day are capable, through grace, of bringing our souls nearer to God; and with this view we should recal them to our thoughts, and seek grace that they may be sanctified to our good and the divine glory.

JUNE 16.

"I know thy judgments, Lord, are right,
Though they may seem severe:
The sharpest sufferings I endure,
Flow from thy tender care."

EVERY thorny path I have been called to travel, and every bitter cup which my heavenly Father has given me to drink, since I professed to desire him as my present and everlasting portion, have, one and all, been appointed and sent in mercy. There has always been some manifest fault to be corrected, or some lesson to be learnt, which required these visitations. Yet, while under the rod, it has been hard work to bring the mind to see in all this the pure, unmixed wisdom and goodness of God, especially under such trials as in their nature drew a veil of gloom and despondency over the soul. When the cloud has, however, passed away, and the mind become composed, there has appeared much wisdom in the order and nature of these dispensations, and much mercy in sending and timing them as they were sent. Gracious God! keep me near to thyself in the simplicity and affection of a little child. Let me retire to rest under a deep and humbled sense of my many and great sins, negligences, and ignorances, and also under a cheering, soul-refreshing confidence, that, in Christ Jesus, I have a plenteous redemption. Leave me not to myself, either sleeping or waking; and if it still seems good in thy sight to appoint me chastisements, may I have grace to bear all with patience and meekness, and be enabled to come out of all, purified as gold from the furnace; and thus more fitted for thy service, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

JUNE 17.

"*The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants; and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*"—Psalm xxxiv. 22.

How frequently and how blessedly does the Lord set his seal to this portion of his word! This day he has done so in the truly placid, peaceful, believing death of another of my people. Poor James G——, he had long been greatly harassed by Satan, and much afflicted with a shattered frame, enfeebled nerves, and an irritable temper, so that his comforts were few, his sorrows many, and his fears deep and frequent. At times he hardly could be considered of a sound mind: but his soul did, on the whole, long to be what the Lord would have it to be; and Christ Jesus and his precious salvation were all his hope, and certainly his principal desire. And while the earthly house of his tabernacle decayed, the inward man was sanctified, comforted, and renewed day by day. His muscular strength entirely forsook him, but his nerves and temper were sweetly composed—neither pains of body nor terrors of mind were permitted to embitter the latter days of his existence—and as his end drew near, so did his faith and hope increase, and he died with all the gentleness of falling asleep. And why should not we take courage amidst all our trials from without, and all our fears from within? Have we not fled to Christ Jesus as our only hope and desire for salvation? Do we not, amidst all our fears and infirmities, desire to live to him, and die in him, and be with him for ever? Did he ever turn away from one poor humble supplicant? No, he is Jesus still, and "none of them that trust in him shall be desolate."

JUNE 18.

" Oh, had I wings like yonder bird,
That soars above its downy nest,
I'd fly away, unseen, unheard,
Where I might be for aye at rest.

" I'd fly, but not to scenes below,
Tho' ripe with every promis'd bliss,
For what's the world? a garnish'd show—
A decorated wilderness.

" I'd fly,—and rest amidst the joys
Which angel lips alone can tell;
Where bloom the bowers of paradise—
Where songs in sweetest transports swell."

THE ordinary strifes and contentions of this world, and the common-place disquietudes of human life are at all times enough to bring the mind of the believing follower of Jesus to the conclusion of desiring to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. But at this particular time, when politics, and revolutionary and selfish ambitious principles are rampant among vast multitudes of professors of the gospel, and when agitation and strife have banished peace and love from so many parts of our land, who would wish to remain a witness to such evils, when there appears no room for hoping a better state of things, and no prospect of any efforts to restore peace being successful? No, it would be far better to depart—to leave a scene where no good can be done, and where the witnessing of evil must be painful to the heart.

" Yes, I would rest beneath that throne,
Whose glorious circle gilds the sky;
Where sits Jehovah, who alone
Can wipe the mourner's weeping eye."

JUNE 19.

"The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty: he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing."—Zeph. iii. 17.

This is a very wonderful declaration! Had it been merely proclaimed to the church, that the Lord God who was in the midst of her was mighty, this declaration would have inspired more fear than hope; but this mighty God is her God, and the especial God of every real member of the church, as much as though there were none other creature to be a God unto; and he is such individual's God to save him, to redeem, to sanctify, to lead, and conduct even unto his heavenly kingdom. And then, how surpassingly wonderful, that this High and Holy One who inhabiteth eternity should take such interest in the souls of any of the poor guilty sons or daughters of Adam, as to rejoice over them with joy—to rest in his love—to rejoice over them with singing! Nothing but that love which induced him to give up his only beloved Son, to the intent that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have everlasting life; nothing but this could cause the Lord thus to feel and act towards sinners. Oh, how evident is it that God is love! Judgment is a part of his government, for truth and righteousness require its frequent display; but the Lord does not rest in his judgments, neither does he rest in his anger; but he rests in his love! He winds up all his dispensations, and concludes all his dealings with his children in love, and, if the expression may be allowed, he sits down in this frame of mind, and looks on and rejoices over them for ever and ever, as the purchased possession of his beloved Son!

JUNE 20.

" Eternity!
Ere the foundations of the world were laid,
Ere kindling light th' almighty word obeyed,
Thou wert; and, when the subterraneous flame
Shall burst its prison, and devour this frame,
From angry heaven when the keen lightning flies,
When fervent heat dissolves the melting skies,
Thou still shalt be; still as thou wert before,
And know no change, when time shall be no more.
O endless thought! divine eternity!
Th' immortal soul shares but a part of thee;
For thou wert present when our life began,
When the warm dust shot up in breathing man."

It is in losing sight of this stupendous, this all-absorbing subject of *eternity* that we are so strangely infatuated and taken up with the things of time and sense. Oh, how must this subject arrest the departed and undying soul who has entered on its confines to journey onward for ever, and at no period to find a limit or an end! If saved, this one thought that it is saved and blessed for ever, will crown its felicity! And if lost, how inexpressibly distressing and awful the recollection, that eternity is engraved on its prison walls, and on all its miserable destinies! O, my God, my merciful God and Father in Christ Jesus, I bless and praise thee that I am not now fixed in that awful state, that I am not lost for ever; a thousand past events would have led to this, had not thy mercies and forbearance been other than they were. May I henceforth live to thee in all I am, and all I have, and all I do. Fit me for eternally loving and beholding—for eternally serving and glorifying thee in thine own kingdom. Let every event and circumstance connected with my few and swiftly fleeting days on earth be sanctified and made subservient to preparing my soul for thy presence and kingdom, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

JUNE 21.

" *Then shall the earth yield her increase; and God, even our own God, shall bless us. God shall bless us; and all the ends of the earth shall praise him.*"—Psalm lxvii. 6, 7.

In that happy spiritual reign of Christ Jesus, which is yet to bless this world, all these words will be fully realized. " The earth," which has so long groaned under the effects of the curse, will then cease to be barren, and " our land," and all lands, shall yield their increase, in an hundred-fold degree to their pious cultivators. Sin, the curse of all lands, and the cause of all their sterility, being banished, to a great extent, from the world, " the heavens will hear the earth, and the earth will hear the corn, and wine, and oil, and they shall hear Jezreel." Our rich landscapes that now crown every hill and beautify every valley, and all the richness of growing and increasing crops that will by and by ripen into harvest, are but faint pictures of what the whole world must become when the latter day's glory shall visit the earth, and the fulness of spiritual and temporal blessings shall crown the year and refresh the souls and bodies of all the tribes of mankind. Oh, happy and blessed world, when God shall thus bless mankind—" when the sensible tokens of the divine favour will be universally and continually enjoyed, to a degree now unfelt and unknown." Lord, grant me a foretaste of this blessing before I go hence to be no more seen; even of thy manifested love and rich and sanctifying grace, that whatever portion of earthly goods may fall to me during my brief stay here below, I may be rich in the abundance of those joys and spiritual treasures which thy beloved Son hath purchased for all them that desire and love his appearing.

JUNE 22.

" Cease, ye pilgrims, cease to mourn,
Press onward to the prize;
Soon the Saviour will return
Triumphant in the skies.
Yet a season, and you know
Happy entrance will be given,
All our sorrows left below,
And earth exchanged for heaven."

Every day and every hour that passes over the Christ-seeking pilgrim's head brings him a stage nearer to his perfect and eternal rest. There is an appointed time for man on earth, and every day of that time is noted in the calendar of heaven; and all the allotted, and all the permitted trials that ever have, or ever will diversify these stages, are regulated in unspeakable wisdom and boundless love. Many a step in this journey is attended with pain, many a day is overcast with clouds, and many a night is a season of storm and tempest; but still the journey is shortening, the trials are lessening, the dangers are hastening to a close; and the haven and home where we would be is one day and one hour nearer at hand than when the last day and the last hour commenced. The Lord is neither slack nor unmindful of his promise: he will come, and our hearts shall rejoice, and our joy no one shall thenceforth take from us. Lord, give me grace daily to gird up the loins of my mind, to be sober, and hope to the end. Preserve me from murmuring and complaining by the way; give me grace to see thy hand of mercy in every trying dispensation, as well as in every joyous event. Let all quicken my steps and fill my soul with more pure and fervent desires to behold my Redeemer, and to be made like unto Him for ever.

JUNE 23.

"*They shall reign with him for ever and ever.*"—Rev. xxii. 5.

THE grand preparations now making for the coronation of our young and beloved Queen engross the labours, the consultations, and conversation of multitudes, both in our own and in foreign lands. All this may well bring the thoughts of the mind to contemplate the grand coronation-day of the saints, when the Lord their Redeemer shall come to be glorified in them, and to glorify them by taking them back with himself into his own kingdom; where it is said concerning them, that "they shall reign for ever and ever."

The crowning of an earthly prince, the placing him on a throne of state, and the gathering around him all the nobles of the land to do him honour, is, certainly, exalting such an individual to the highest pinnacle of earthly greatness: more than this the world has not to bestow; and this it can bestow on but a small number. But the Lord Jesus Christ, whom we serve, has far greater things wherewith to honour his children; and he has more than sufficient to bestow on all the myriads of his redeemed family, although they are gathered from the east and the west, from the north and the south, countless as the sands on the sea shore; and each shall have a crown of glory. The splendour of an earthly throne is great, but that of a glorified saint in heaven is far greater. The time an earthly prince can reign is short; but that of the saints is for ever and ever. The real enjoyments of earthly kings and queens are few and low; those of the saints are endless and angelic, full and perfect, for they reign in knowledge, victory, righteousness, glory, and immortality for ever and ever.

JUNE 24.

"*They shall reign for ever and ever.*"—Rev. xxii. 5.

YES, they shall reign in *knowledge, wisdom, and understanding.* Earthly princes may be, and frequently are, ignorant of many things, and especially so of God, of themselves, and of their subjects. Not so the crowned saints above! They know every thing that can add to their Maker's glory; every thing that can add to their own blessedness, and to the felicity of all around them. They are, in this respect, made like unto the angels; yea, they are in a measure made like unto Christ himself. They know even as they are known. Worlds lie before them, and God himself stands revealed in the Son of his love, and in his works of creation, of providence, and grace; and over these fields their enlarged and perfected faculties of knowledge and understanding range and reign in continued accessions of wisdom and joy unspeakable, and, to us, incomprehensible. A little intellectual and experimental knowledge of these things gives much delight, even now; but what will it do when the very fountain of all sanctified knowledge is at hand, and the soul draws and drinks continually! when the creature sits at the feet of its visible Creator, and hears and learns directly from himself; and when it mingles with angels, and archangels, and all the spirits of the just made perfect, and receives instructions from them for ever and ever! Oh, what a reign will this be! may the Lord fit and prepare us every day for its enjoyment; that so, when we are removed from this world of ignorance, error, and mistakes, we may live and glorify God in that perfection of knowledge which constitutes so much of the felicity of heaven.

JUNE 25.

"*They shall reign for ever and ever.*"—Rev. xxii. 5.

The glorified saint reigns in *victory*. Earthly princes at times can neither rule their subjects, nor their own spirits, nor resist the power of their enemies. They are sometimes defeated, dethroned, enslaved, or destroyed. Not so the redeemed and glorified children of God; they had their many and great tribulations when in the flesh, and they were frequently required to contend with evil principalities and powers; but they overcame through the blood of the Lamb; and having reached the kingdom of their Lord, the palm waves in their hand, and the crown rests on their head, and they reign as conquerors over every enemy, spiritual, temporal, and eternal. Never will their happy souls be called into conflict again. Their warfare is ended; there is no enemy within the camp; no adversary going about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. All is peace, because Christ and his redeemed are one; and into their triumphant and blessed world entereth nothing that defileth; nothing to endanger; nothing to disturb! My God and Saviour, may I not long and pray, and hunger and thirst after this conquest? Oh, give me this victory, and admit me to reign among thy redeemed children in all their bliss, and in all their glory for ever and ever! But is it lawful to aspire after such an inheritance? Is it possible such things can ever be enjoyed by such a worthless creature as myself? Oh, yes, thou hast said it, thou hast promised it through, and on account of, the merits and sacrifice of thy dear Son, and thou wouldst have me believe it. Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief!

JUNE 26.

"*They shall reign for ever and ever.*"—Rev. xxii. 5.

EARTHLY crowns are frequently stained with blood, and earthly monarchies are frequently blood bought, blood retained, and lost in blood. Oft-times has the Almighty permitted wicked men to prosper in their march of ambition as scourges to punish nations for their sins. But in the midst of all their luxuries and honours sleep has forsaken their pillow. They have risen from their couch, but not to enjoy the day: they have sat down to the banquet, but they have sickened over their feast: they have called for music and for mirth, and the harp and the viol have been in their assemblies, but gladness has been a stranger to their hearts. Conscience was at work, and God had of old times declared there should be no peace unto the wicked. The hand has written on the wall of their inmost souls, as it wrote on the walls of Belshazzar's palace, and in defiance of all their hostility, they have trembled. Not so the redeemed and glorified children of God: they live and reign on in *righteousness* and *joy* unspeakable, and full of glory. They are robed in white: they stand forth pure, and perfectly happy: every stain of natural and of practical defilement has been washed away in the atoning blood of the Lamb, and by the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost. The righteousness of Christ Jesus is imputed to them, and the imparted righteousness of the same blessed Redeemer is enstamped on all the faculties of their souls, so that they are as the angels, *glorious in holiness*, having neither spot, nor wrinkle, nor any such thing. And as their righteousness is perfect, so is their *joy*, for it is unspeakable and full of glory, and in this felicity and righteousness they will reign for ever and ever.

JUNE 27.

"*They shall reign for ever and ever.*"—Rev. xxii. 5.

THE reign of the saints will be a reign of *glory*. There is, no doubt, much of earthly glory connected with crowns and kingdoms; and so much of this is held up in the ceremonies of a coronation day, that many of the more retired and humble portion of the people would be quite confounded and overpowered by such displays of grandeur and magnificence, of pomp, and power, and greatness, as then take place. But wonderful and uncommon as all this may be, it is but earthly glory; it lasts but a short time, and then vanishes away. But the glory of the Lord endureth for ever, and the glory of the saints is the imparted glory of God the Son; and because he ever liveth, so shall his glorified children ever live also, and they shall behold and partake of his glory, and be changed from one degree of it to another for ever and ever. They shall shine forth as the stars in heaven. They shall, in a measure, be made like unto Christ, even in the glory and dignity which he will put upon, and invest their risen and immortal bodies with at the last day. But oh, it is in vain to attempt any description or conception of the state of a saint reigning in glory with the Lord of life and glory in heaven! All the pomp and splendour of coronations and of royal banquetings, and processions of nobles, and all the brilliancy of thrones of state, and all the sounds of martial and of solemn music, can give no idea of the glory that remains to be revealed, and which will actually be inherited by the most humble and obscure child of God, when the angels shall convey the liberated spirit into its purchased possession. Lord, prepare and bring us all thither, for Jesus Christ's sake.

JUNE 28.

"*They shall reign for ever and ever.*"—Rev. xxii. 5.

The redeemed and glorified saint shall reign in *life* and *immortality*. Earthly titles, honours, kingdoms, crowns, and sceptres pass away in common with all other things beneath the sun; and shortly the soul must quit the pampered and idolized body, and the body itself must return to the dust from whence it was taken; and if not redeemed through the blood of the Lamb, both must inherit everlasting shame, contempt, and misery. But not so the believer. Because Christ lives, he lives also. In his case the redeemed spirit has only to pass out of the body, and, behold, it is for ever with the Lord; meanwhile, the body has to rest but a little while, and then to come forth in life and immortality. This world passeth away, but the Lord who made it liveth for ever. Here man is every hour hastening to the house appointed for all living; but there is an hereafter, and to the child of God it is that of an endless life, an ever-blooming youth, an unfathomable and inconceivable immortality in the new Jerusalem, the city of the living God. Oh, how does this glorious hereafter write "vanity" on all the fleeting and polluted dying things beneath the sun! In the contemplation of these things it seems almost a matter of total indifference how, or in what station, the Christian passes his few short days in this troubled and dying world. To depart and be with Christ; to behold him as he is; to reign with him, and to partake of life, glory, and immortality in heaven, these are the only things that ought really to possess our whole souls. Lord, give me to hunger and thirst after these unspeakable privileges more and more every day.

JUNE 29.

"*Man being in honour abideth not.*"—Psalm xlix. 12.
"*All the glory of man is as the flower of the grass.*"—1 Pet. i. 24.

YESTERDAY beheld one of the most splendid exhibitions of earthly grandeur, in the coronation of our young Queen, that the nation ever witnessed, and now it is all passed away. The hundreds of thousands who assembled to gaze on the train of royalty, nobility, and rank, as it passed along the streets, have departed; the seats and the throne, that blazed with their gay and grand occupants, in Westminster Abbey, are left vacant; the sound of anthems, and of shouts of "God save the Queen," are silent: the crown, the coronets, the robes, and richly-adorned paraphernalia, are again laid aside, and things already begin to return to their old course. Thus passeth away all the glory of man, even as the flower of the field! However high in honour to-day, he cannot abide therein. These honours and glory forsake him, or he is called to resign them, and to return to the dust, even as others. Oh, how would this reflection sadden my heart, were I among those who are desiring and receiving their good things in this life! Lord, I bless thee that I feel this world is too little, too light, too empty to satisfy my soul. I would not be a king on earth for all the earth has to offer me; but I am exceedingly desirous of being made a king and a priest unto God in heaven. To reign over my fellow men, I have no desire; but I would fain depart to reign with Christ in glory and immortality. Lord, fit me for being crowned in that world where the glory passeth not away; fit me for entering on those joys that are at thy right hand for evermore.

JUNE 30.

"Though lovely many an earthly flower;
Its beauty fades and dies;
But saints unchanging form a bower,
To bloom in Paradise.
Sprung from the true immortal vine,
In him they live, and round him twine."

At this time the earth is clad in its beauties of every colour, and with flowers of every order; nor is there one but exhibits the wonders of Him who alike made the gigantic forest tree and the smallest plant that adorns the ground. He produced the sun that invigorates the face of the earth, and all the myriads of productions which that earth is now sending forth; and he will appoint the time and season for bringing all these material works of his hands again to their original state. Beauteous while they last, yet they are but things of a few days' existence, and then they fade away. Let it be so; it has been good to admire them to-day, although they may droop to-morrow; and it is still better to admire Him who made them, as being the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And oh, how delightful to remember, that in yonder world of life and immortality nothing fades, nothing droops or decays. Whatever the beauties of its fields of light may be, these, like the inhabitants, will never grow old; time is there lost in one present eternity. Youth, beauty, and perfection, loveliness, holiness, and wisdom, grace, and glory adorn saints and angels for ever; and whatever constitutes the fitting up and adorning of that world, is alike unaffected by time. Lord, I would adore thee for the fading beauties of this dying earth, but I cannot be satisfied until I behold thine undying beauties in the kingdom of heaven.

JULY 1.

"Haste thee on from grace to glory,
Armed by faith, and wing'd by prayer,
Heaven's eternal days before thee,
God's own hand shall guide thee there.
Soon shall close thy earthly mission,
Soon shall pass thy pilgrim days;
Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise."

How strikingly evident it is that all things here are hastening to an end! This evening has closed the first day of July; and July once come, has finished the first half of another year. Six months more, O, my soul, of thine appointed time on earth are fled, and thou art all this much nearer to thy eternal destiny! And art thou indeed "hastening on from grace to glory?" Oh, for more faith, more victory over all thy spiritual adversaries. It will not be long ere thy business and concerns with this earth and time will for ever close. From the beginning thou hast been bringing thy years to an end, as it were a tale that is told; and a few more rising and setting suns will wind up that tale altogether. O, my God and Saviour, let thine own hand shield and guide me even to the end; and as the natural year will at once be shortening its days and ripening its fruits for the gracious purposes ordained by thyself, so let my days at once bring me nearer to their close, and find me, through thy grace, proportionally ripening for immortality and glory in thy blessed kingdom, where,

"Hope shall change to glad fruition,
Faith to sight, and prayer to praise."

JULY 2.

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation: that saith to Zion, Thy God reigneth."—Isaiah lii. 7.

This alludes to the heralds sent forth by Cyrus to proclaim liberty to the captive Jews; and is quoted by St. Paul as figurative of the coming of Christ, and the proclamation of his gospel of peace. Much cause had the captive Israelites to rejoice at the glad tidings of deliverance from an earthly captivity and temporal bondage. But how much greater cause of exultation have we that the glad tidings of present peace and future and eternal glory are brought nigh, even to our doors! Yes, the gospel is a message of peace and salvation to men. It finds us condemned criminals, and it offers us pardon! It finds us without spiritual health or strength, and it brings us to an almighty and all-willing Physician! It finds us daily wandering and straying with the multitude, and it warns and intreats us to flee from the wrath to come; and it shows us how we may obtain grace and strength to accomplish the work. It finds us polluted and defiled, and it shows a fountain wherein we may wash and be clean. In short, it finds us ignorant of all saving knowledge, and it instructs us; naked, and it furnishes us with clothing; starving on husks, and it leads us to a banquet where all things are ready. It finds us captives to Satan, and it makes us Christ's free children; troubled, and it brings us comfort; broken-hearted, and it binds us up; afar off, as children of wrath, and it brings us nigh, and makes us children of grace. Oh, that we may ever know and partake of all the blessings of these glad tidings, for Jesus Christ's sake!

JULY 3.

"*How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace.*"—Isaiah lii. 7.

Oh, blessed sound! In Christ Jesus there is plenteous redemption; his blood cleanseth from all sin. Whosoever will may go unto him; and him that goeth shall in no wise be cast out. He came to seek and to save them that are lost; to die the just for the unjust, to bring *sinners* unto God! With what delight, then, ought our ears to listen to these glad tidings! with what aspirations of holy joy and longing should we look forward to the consummation of these tidings of salvation! Yet, alas, how many, in all the ranks of society, neither regard the message nor value the glorious liberty held out! They are stupified and entranced with the cares or the pleasures of this life. Oh, my God! let my soul daily enjoy fresh tokens of thy redeeming love while it is in this land of strangers, and at a distance from thy heavenly kingdom, and may I daily have my face set towards the new Jerusalem, the city of thee, my living God. Prepare me, O Lord, every day more and more for that Mount Sion which is above, and for mingling with that innumerable company of angels who stand around thy throne. Bring me, O Lord, in thine own good time, to the general assembly and church of the first-born who are written in heaven, and unto thyself as the righteous Judge of all, and to all the happy spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling; then shall I everlastingly adore and praise thy holy name.

JULY 4.

"*In this world ye shall have tribulation.*"—John xvi. 33.

He whom God hath blessed with the necessaries of life, and with a tolerable portion of health, and cheerfulness of animal spirits, has much to be thankful for: nay, he has all, so far as temporal things go, that can make him happy. Yet this is a dangerous state to be in. No one is more inclined to overlook the grand concerns of another world than he who is at ease in this. Hence it is that so many experience the full meaning of our Lord's words, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." Such is the decree of heaven, and it is mercifully adhered to by the Supreme Ruler. And shall we repine? Oh no, it were better every day to be exercised with sanctified pain of body, and affliction of mind, and poverty of circumstances, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Hence it is that the Lord deals out to many a saint on earth a train of dispensations at once afflictive to body and mind, and thereby he graciously does away our hopes and expectations of a satisfying portion on this side of Jordan. Be it so: this is not our rest, although we are naturally inclined to make it such, and to wish it might be our enduring inheritance. Blessed Lord! do thou choose for me, and while thou art sending what is safest and best for my soul's everlasting rest, give me grace to say, from the very bottom of my heart, "Not my will, but thine be done," as to all the dispensations of thy providence, and all the leadings of thy grace concerning me.

JULY 5.

" Faith shows the precious promise, seal'd
With the Redeemer's blood;
And helps my feeble hopes to rest
Upon a faithful God.

" There, there, unshaken would I rest,
Till this vile body dies;
And then, on faith's triumphant wings,
At once to glory rise."

WERE it not for this staff, this support and comfort, imparted to the tried, afflicted, and often tempest-tossed believer, his case would be indeed most miserable. Afflictions are sometimes ready to weigh down even the soul that is resting on the promises, and what then must they be to him who has no hope? I have frequently been struck with this subject. In my own case, I very often seem like an expiring lamp, not quite gone out, but flickering and struggling for existence. One moment faith lights up a little ray of brightness, and the promises cast a cheering light into the soul, like the lamp in its momentary rekindlings; and then again the darkening and distressing clouds of pains and languor of body, and of unstrung and agitated nerves, and of the enemies' assaults and disheartening suggestions, seem on the point of extinguishing the little hope and peace that are left; so that it is hard work to keep my "feeble hopes still resting on a faithful God." O then, what must be the melancholy condition of those who suffer as much, and even more than I do, in the body, and who yet are destitute of the consolations of the gospel! Lord, I bless and adore thee for my hope, feeble and flickering as it is, and I beseech thee to strenghten and establish it more and more, every day, for Jesus Christ my Redeemer's sake.

JULY 6.

"*Whom having not seen, ye love.*"—1 Peter i. 8.

THE great work of the Holy Spirit is to glorify Christ Jesus. But such is the imperfect state of our mental faculties, and such the combined graces and glories of the incarnate Son of God, that we are overwhelmed and confounded almost as soon as we attempt to investigate the subject of God and man in one person. One endearing quality, however, shines out beyond all others, and it breaks on us with a softer and sweeter influence than all the rest, and that is the attribute of *love;* and as we gaze, and think, and are enabled to fix the astonished mind on this boundless, endless, fathomless quality of the eternal Son of God, our poor, cold, and hard hearts sometimes feel a little warmed and softened down in gratitude and love to him; and those are our best moments when we can enter deepest into such sensations. To trust and not to be afraid; to contemplate an unseen, but ever-living Saviour, as our brother and our friend; to believe that he loves and has loved us, and given himself for us, and redeemed us to God by his blood, and that, by and by, we shall receive the end and consummation of our faith, even the salvation of our souls, and behold and partake of his presence, his kingdom, and glory for ever; this begets love for love, and through grace enables the soul at times to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Blessed God! let this be the frame of my mind at the close of every day and at the dawn of every morning, until I awake up in thy likeness, to be for ever satisfied and for ever with thee.

JULY 7.

"*I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*"—Solomon's Song ii. 3.

It is delightful to sit down under the refreshing shade of a wide-spreading tree; but how much more to sit, in the use of ordinances and Sabbath services, under the shadow of the Redeemer's love? These are the things he has appointed for the delight and refreshment of the hungering and thirsting souls of his seeking people; and these are, and have been found, by happy experience, most sweet to the taste. The house of God and the table of our Lord are places where myriads of souls, now in glory, once found their sweetest delights on earth. Here it was they tasted that the Lord was gracious. Here it was where they were brought to the banqueting house, and found that his banner over them was love. My adorable Lord, it is in this experience that thou dost set to thy seal that thou art the Lord, the Lord gracious and merciful; and these are the secrets of that real, spiritual communion with which the world does not intermeddle, which it does not, cannot understand. May this experience, this privilege, be often vouchsafed to me. I am as yet in a wide and cheerless world, and often the heat of trial makes me faint and become weary by the way. I feel that I am in a barren land, and I look round in vain for rest and food for my soul. Man has it not to bestow; but thou hast all, and more than all I can ask, or need, or desire. Let me, then, sit continually under thy shadow, and feed on thee by faith, and thy name shall have all the praise.

JULY 8.

"Though heaven afflicts, I'll not repine,
Each real comfort still is mine;
Comforts that shall o'er death prevail,
And journey with me through the vale."

JUST as a wise and an affectionate parent corrects a wayward child that he loves, so does our Heavenly Father correct those whom he loves. There is no child of God whose growth in grace is so steadily advancing as to render chastisement unnecessary. When our pathway has been long strewed with comforts and prosperous circumstances, and when all things have glided smoothly and quietly on, and when means of grace, and opportunities of attending them have been extended with little or no interruption, then it is that we have generally, nay, always, found that our love, our fervency, our watchfulness, and our realization of the divine presence, have decreased rather than increased. We become like the Laodiceans, lukewarm in our spirits. Now this must not, cannot go on, if heaven is to be our final resting place. Hence the Lord afflicts, tries, and chastises in a variety of ways, to quicken our steps, to increase our desires, to humble our hearts, and to spiritualize our affections. On one hand he sends us some sweet promise, to assure us that he is, and will be with us for good; and on the other hand, he continues to plant here a thorn, and there a bramble, in our path, and to permit one fair earthly prospect after another to vanish, and one earthly staff after another to bend and break under our pressure, that we may look to, and depend on him alone for present and eternal happiness.

JULY 9.

"*I will be glad and rejoice in thy mercy, for thou hast considered my trouble; thou hast known my soul in adversities.*" —Psalm xxxi. 7.

How widely different is it to talk of afflictions and troubles, and of deliverances out of them, as a matter of theory, and to experience the trial of these afflictions and deliverances in our own persons! Many a young minister begins to preach about these things, and many young Christians hold conversations on these matters before they have actually passed through them; but, by and by, the Lord, in his gracious dealings with their souls, leads them down into the valley of Mesech, and brings them into the school of real adversity. A cup is given them to drink filled from the wells of Marah, and not from those of Elim. The flowery path they hitherto had trodden is succeeded by thorns and briars; and the fair sky and high sun, which hitherto had lighted and cheered their journey, are eclipsed; and clouds, and storms, and darkness surround them. This is real, experimental trouble and adversity, and it may afflict us in mind, or body, or circumstances, or in all of these together. But why is it so? It is that the Lord may now manifest himself as a God, hearing and answering prayer, and thus at once fit these very individuals to go forth, and to converse and preach on these subjects experimentally, for others good, as well as to deepen his work of grace in their own souls, so that they shall be enabled to say,

"Thy presence, Lord, can cheer my heart,
Though every earthly comfort die:
Thy smile can bid my pains depart,
And raise my sacred pleasures high."

JULY 10.

"*Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.*"—John vi. 67, 68.

Here must be our refuge and our strength, our wisdom and our righteousness, our all in all. "We know not what to do against principalities and powers, but our eyes must be on Christ. When Satan brings forward his charges to condemn, what is the answer? 'Christ died, Christ is risen, Christ is at the right-hand of God, Christ is our advocate with the Father, Christ hath a plentitude and sufficiency of grace, Christ can save to the uttermost those that come unto God by him, Christ is stronger than the strong man, Christ hath exceeding abundant grace to save the very chief of sinners, Christ ascended up on high, and gave gifts unto men, even unto the rebellious. If God should refuse to hear the blood of his Son, if Christ should refuse to hear the cry of his praying servant, if Satan can drown the intercession of Christ, if Satan can pluck Christ from the right-hand of his Father, or can pluck away the companions of Christ out of his heart, then, but never till then, shall penitent sinners that go to Christ, trusting in him for grace and salvation, be cast out, or put to shame." Here then is our duty and privilege at all times, in all places, and under all circumstances, to go to Christ; to remain, by prayer and faith, waiting upon him; to turn our eyes, our hearts, and all our hopes on Him who, when the multitude forsook him, turned unto the twelve and said, "Will ye also go away?" And may Peter's words be the language of our hearts on every occasion.

JULY 11.

"*If God be for us, who can be against us?*"—Rom. viii 31.

SATAN may be permitted to tempt, to accuse; and to exert a power that is like a rolling flood; yet the Lord hath promised to be a wall of fire round about his praying and believing people. What, though this enemy goes to and fro to devour; the angels of Christ are also about our bed, and about our path, and are appointed to keep us in all our ways. "Whatever poison there is in Satan, there is an antidote in Christ against it. He is a destroyer, Christ is a Saviour; he is a tempter, Christ is a Comforter; he is an enemy, Christ is a Captain; he an accuser, Christ an advocate; he a prince, and a god of this world; Christ is a King of Saints, and Lord of Glory. Three names hath Satan given him from his three most active principles; 'a *serpent*' for his cunning; 'a *lion*' for his strength; and 'a *dragon*' for his malice. And Christ hath a name which meets with every one of these: 'a *Counsellor*,' no subtilty of the serpent can deceive him: 'a *Mighty God*,' no strength of the lion can overcome him: 'an *Everlasting Father*,' no malice of the dragon can out-act him; and he is '*Wonderful*' in all these, ordering and improving his wisdom, his power, and his love unto the peace of his people, against whom Satan warreth." This being the case, the believer may well rejoice; and under every trying, every threatening circumstance, take courage and say, "In all these things I shall be more than conqueror." "God is my Father; Christ Jesus is my Redeemer; and the Holy Ghost is my Comforter." Oh, the blessing of having such a refuge in time of trouble and danger! "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

JULY 12.

" Tis sweet when cloudless suns arise,
As through the vale we move;
But oh, more sweet to recognize,
Through dreary nights and starless skies,
The smiling face of love."

THE beauties of this lower creation are at this time abundantly profuse; wherever the eye turns it sees little else than manifestations of the goodness and wisdom of the Creator of all things; such manifestations as are well calculated to expand the heart and raise the affections of the people of God in wonder, gratitude, and love. But all these are a blank, a cheerless, and even a saddening sight, when the heart is overwhelmed with distress, and God the Holy Ghost, that should refresh our souls, is away. On the other hand, where the cheering, soul-refreshing consolations of this divine Comforter are present, no external circumstances can make us sad. Nights may be dreary, and skies may be starless, and winter may reign in all its gloom and severity, yet, if the Lord smiles on us, all is well; yea, all is joyous. But, when the enjoyments of outward mercies, and the displays of the works of God are coupled with a sense of his love and peace in the soul, then it is summer indeed. At such times the soul cannot but exclaim, "Lord, it is good to be here." But, after all, what is this to that everlasting summer, and that unbroken, that exceeding, that eternal weight of glory which remains to be revealed in heaven? Gracious God, I would look on thy beauteous works below, and from them I would look by faith on those that adorn and bless thy kingdom above, until my soul feels something of a holy ardency to be there where thou art ever displaying thyself, and all thy ways, and all thy works to thy redeemed and happy children.

JULY 13.

"*It is good for me to draw near to God.*"—Psalm lxxiii. 28.

WHETHER we are in the house of prayer, or in our own closet, or travelling by the way, or sitting at home, the Lord is ever near at hand; and we, and all our thoughts, our words, and actions are ever open to his view. It is, therefore, with the mind and the heart that we are said to draw nigh, or to come more immediately into the divine presence at one time than at another; and that we may find the good of doing so, we must labour to come in a suitable frame, and with suitable feelings and desires of the heart. Oh, that this may be our frequent and happy experience. But what is that state of mind and heart that will make such acts pleasing to God, and good for ourselves? It is the humble, loving, obedient disposition of a little child. It is a deep view of our own ignorance and unworthiness, and an exalted conception of the wonderful love of God in providing redemption for us through the blood of his dear Son. It is an earnest desire to do the will of God in all things; to be devoted to him in body, soul, and spirit; and to fill up our own allotted station in society to his glory in all we do. If this be the frequent exercise of our souls, we shall find it "good for us;" we shall enjoy more and more of that peace which surpasses the world's understanding; we shall be enabled to go forth and encounter our trials and afflictions with renewed strength, to bear up under them with christian submission and fortitude, and we shall come out of them much benefited; and God will in all these things have glory through Jesus Christ.

JULY 14.

" I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you."
John xiv. 18.

By men of the world, who are all gaiety and mirth, full of animal buoyancy of spirit, and surrounded by the hilarity of the thoughtless and the dissipated, this, our blessed Lord's promise, will be passed by as a thing they neither value nor feel the want of. When you speak to such about the consolations of the gospel, and the peace of God which keeps the heart and mind in tranquillity amidst outward trials and inward conflicts, they look on you as speaking parables. But oh, what a blessing it is to the poor afflicted and tempest-driven Christian, to be able to read and receive such a promise as this! to be enabled to lean upon it as upon a rod and staff of comfort, and to find peace communicated to the soul! May it be thus, O Lord, with all thy tried and tempted children, through all the days of their earthly pilgrimage. In the unerring dispensations of thy providence it hath pleased thee that many sorrows should encompass the steps of thy people in their journey heavenward; this must be right, because it is thy doing, and may we, under every new assault, be enabled to hear thee say, " I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you." Yes, Lord,

> " While my spirit within me is prest
> With sorrow, temptation, and fear;
> Like John, I would flee to thy breast,
> And pour my complaints in thine ear."

This is thine own appointed way for our relief; may grace and faith be ever at hand to enable me to do it, I beseech thee.

JULY 15.

"Abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed at his coming."—1 John ii. 28.

I AM very sure, that as the branch cannot bear fruit unless it continues to grow on, and receive nourishment from the vine, so my soul can never receive or enjoy any of the fruits of the Spirit, unless they are supplied through the intercession, and on account of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ. O, that I may be enabled to live and abide in him every day and hour in all earnestness and faith, in all love and child-like obedience. My God and Saviour, I look and long for that glorious victory over sin, which shall bring all the faculties of my soul into sweet subjection and conformity to thyself. Give me, O Lord, give me more and more of that kingdom of God which is within those who abide in Christ by faith and love. Having this evidence, this living testimony that I am led by thy Spirit, and that I am abiding in thee, and that thy Spirit is within me, as a Spirit of sanctification and of adoption, I shall be enabled to cry, "Abba, Father," and not be alarmed or ashamed at thy coming to call me into thy presence, either at the hour of death or in the day of judgment. Give me, O Lord, to increase and ripen in all that shall make me meet for the kingdom of heaven; even as the fruit on the vine increases and ripens by being placed under the continued bright shinings of the natural sun. Never suffer me to fall into the unhallowed and dangerous notion, that because I am justified freely through faith alone, therefore my own growth in grace is neither to be longed after or considered necessary. May I feel as desirous of entire sanctification through the Holy Ghost, as I feel desirous of eternal salvation through the blood of the Lamb.

JULY 16.

"*For our God is a consuming fire.*"—Heb. xii. 29.

This is, and must be the character of God in reference to every sinner who is not interested in the merits, death, and intercession of Christ. Sin must ever keep the transgressor at an awful distance from a holy God, unless there be found one to make an atonement, and to obtain pardon. This the Lord Jesus Christ has done for all who repent and believe the gospel. To such God can be just to all his attributes, and yet the justifier of them that believe in Christ, but in no other way. If God the Father blesses us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things, it is and must be *in and through Christ Jesus.* If we are chosen, it is *in Christ;* if we are redeemed, it is *in and by Christ;* if we are predestinated to the adoption of children, it is *in Christ;* if we have obtained an inheritance, it is *in Christ.* Every mercy comes to us in and through Christ. When the Lord looks down on us as we are in ourselves, he sees nothing but sin and imperfection; when he is graciously pleased to look on us as the purchase of his beloved Son, then he smiles, and pardons, and blesses us, and receives us into his grace on earth, and into his glory in heaven; but this is entirely because Christ Jesus hath atoned for our sins by his own obedience and death, and hath interceded for us at the right hand of power. Lord, I feel that I do, indeed, merit nothing but punishment at thine hands. I fain would be without spot or wrinkle of sin, but sin or imperfection is still present in all I am and all I do. Oh, let the blood of Jesus Christ still atone for me, and let thy mercies, for his sake, be daily extended to me in pardoning all my transgressions, and in renewing my soul after the divine image; for without this I must be lost for ever.

JULY 17.

"*And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments or no.*"—Deut. viii. 2.

THERE is nothing more necessary or profitable than a frequent review of the dealings of the Lord with us as a God of grace, of providence, and mercy. It is an exercise that employs the redeemed in heaven, and will, from time to time, employ them through all eternity. But now, while we are on our journey from Egypt to Canaan, it is good often to call to remembrance how the Lord began to work with us, when his grace was apparently first vouchsafed to enlighten our understandings and renew our hearts; and it is good, also, to go still further back, and trace his providential mercies, his forbearance, his compassion, watching over us, preserving, protecting, sustaining, and carrying us onward when we neither loved or feared him; when we knew him not; when we had no desire to know him. And in after life there will be found, in every year of our wilderness state, abundant manifestations of his providence and grace, sufficiently clear and striking to give rise to a new song of praise and thanksgiving. Even those events that seem most contrary to our peace and happiness, will, sooner or later, be found to have been sent or permitted for the wisest and most gracious purposes to our souls, in humbling us, and proving us to our own selves, and in making us know our own hearts, our wants, our weakness, our dangers. All this is good for the soul, and conducive to the glory of God.

JULY 18.

" Come, Lord, and warm my languid heart,
Inspire my lifeless tongue;
And let the joys of heaven impart
Their influence to my song."

TEN thousand circumstances connected with that heaven present themselves to the mind, and all of them of such a nature as to enlarge the desires of the soul after a seat among those who have entered into its joys.

" Sorrow and pain, and every care,
And discord there shall cease;
And perfect joy, and love sincere,
Adorn those realms of peace.

" The soul, from sin for ever free,
Shall mourn its power no more;
But, clothed in spotless purity,
Redeeming love adore."

And can I turn my evening thoughts from the things of this earth, and fix them on those in such a heaven, and not long to be there? Surely, it is intended that I should earnestly desire to be free from sin; and although I am in patience to bear my allotted portion of

" Sorrow, and pain, and every care,"

yet I must hunger and thirst for a world, and an existence, and a society

" Where perfect joy, and love sincere,
Adorn the realms of peace."

Every thing around me bespeaks better things above; and, whether my heart be filled with present gladness or sorrow, I cannot but remember that there is in heaven a deliverance from all grief, and a joy which is unspeakable, everlasting, and full of glory.

JULY 19.

"*Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.*"—Rom. viii. 9.

To make a profession of the gospel is common and easy enough, but to have that mind in us which was also in Christ Jesus, and to walk in some good measure as he walked, is quite another thing. When the Holy Ghost has indeed taken possession of the soul, and convinced, converted, and sanctified it, the effects cannot be hid: in every case the individual is made a new creature, so that, in a measure, all things become new. There is then a heavenly, spiritual disposition, a kind and gentle deportment, a condescending, patient, and humble spirit. As the Lord Jesus thought of men and things, so does that person think in whom the Spirit of Christ preponderates. Jesus compassionated all men; but he loved those in an especial manner who knew his voice and followed him. A humble, heavenly-minded, poor man, was infinitely higher in his esteem than a profane prince. He who ruled his own spirit was honoured by Christ before the man who conquered a city. And such are the views and sentiments of his children. The glare of pomp, the show of splendour, the accumulation of riches, the honours that come from men, were neither sought after nor coveted by him, nor will they be by those who have his mind and Spirit. The frugal meal, the humble dwelling, the sequestered garden, were places where he was to be found; the mourning widow, the fatherless child, the afflicted, maimed, and possessed with devils, were the objects of his peculiar attention and sympathy; and such will be the case with all who follow his steps, so far as they are enabled to copy such an example.

JULY 20.

" Earth has engross'd my thoughts too long!
'Tis time I lift my eyes
Upward, dear Father, to thy throne,
And to my native skies."

" My native skies!" May I thus speak of heaven? and may I lift up my eyes towards the throne of God as my destined future inheritance? Yes, if in the spirit of a little child I can call God my Father; and has he not given me the desire to be found in Christ Jesus, as one of his ransomed children? and has he not given me the desire to be sanctified in body, soul, and spirit? Surely this is the case; and therefore I am encouraged to believe, that God is reconciled to me through the death of his Son, and being reconciled, he is my Father in Christ Jesus, and I am his child, and his kingdom is my promised inheritance, my destined home, and my native skies; because I am born for eternity, and born again of the Spirit, and Jesus is already gone thither to prepare a place for me, that where he is I may be also. Oh, blessed, blessed world! " my native skies,"

" Where seraphs with elevated strains
Circle the throne around;
And move and charm the starry plains
With an immortal sound:"

and where all the spirits of just men made perfect behold the Lamb of God in the midst of them, and hear his voice, partake of his love, and shine in his glory; for they reign with him for ever and ever.

JULY 21.

" In every joy that crowns my days,
In every pain I bear,
Oh, may I find delight in praise,
Or seek relief in prayer!"

THUS occupied, my soul shall advance in that state which shall be good for itself and acceptable to God. Lord, may I thus walk before thee, so that,

" When gladness wings the favour'd hour,
Thy love my thought may fill,"

and then every other comfort will be doubly enjoyed, and my passing refreshments by the way will be sanctified and sweetened. Had I not known what sorrow means by the experience of it, I could neither have sympathized with others, or estimated my own more happy hours as I now do, when blessed with them. And the like may be said with respect to pains and sufferings of the body. To those who have frequently been exercised with them, oh, how sweet is ease and rest; and at such times to be able to view the kind hand of the Lord in all these hours, this is to enjoy them with a double relish. May such, O Lord, be my experience until I arrive in that kingdom where all sadness and sorrow are done away. Happily free as I am at this time from these trials, I cannot expect to go on long without being again called to drink of the cup of affliction, either in mind or in body. May thy grace, O blessed Lord God, prepare me for every event, that in and under all my soul may be resigned and blessed with faith and hope; then

" My lifted eye, without a tear,
The low'ring storm shall see,
My steadfast heart shall know no fear,
Because it rests on thee."

JULY 22.

"*To depart and be with Christ is far better.*"—Phil. i. 23.

It is good for us frequently to meditate on such passages and themes as this. There is such a natural disposition in the heart of man to cleave to the earth, and to be unduly interested with the things of time and sense, and especially when they pass rather smoothly and pleasantly over our heads, that unless the soul is brought frequently and decidedly to the consideration of future and better things, it is exceedingly in danger of being choked with the thorns and gratifications of present events, and of carnal objects. The Apostle loved his fellow men in general, and ardently did he love his children in the gospel, and he esteemed the work of preaching Christ crucified as the most exalted privilege and happiest employment on this side of heaven, and in this work he was ready to spend and be spent for the glory of his Redeemer and the edification of mankind. In this work he ofttimes enjoyed most near and sweet communion with God; so that, on certain occasions, he knew not whether he were in the body or out of the body. But looking forward to that future and all-perfect state that awaited him, and balancing all his present enjoyments and privileges with those future and eternal glories, he felt and said truly, "It is better to depart and be with Christ." And so true is this in every instance, that there is not one follower of the Lamb but may say the like. However happy and useful, however patient under sufferings, however successful in his labours, however willing to die for others, yet, as concerning himself, "to depart and to be with Christ is far better."

JULY 23.

"*To depart and be with Christ is far better.*"—Phil. i. 23.

It is far better, as concerning the evils which are left behind, and the good that henceforth will be possessed and enjoyed to the very full. Is it not good to have reached a world where evil cannot come? And are not evils of every shape and name continually surrounding us through every stage and station of this life? Do not the powers of hell unite with the infirmities and corruptions of our nature; and do not all these league with all that is evil in the world to deceive, ensnare, defile, and destroy the soul? Does not even the real Christian carry about him a body of sin and death; and is he not at times brought to groan within himself, being burthened? Do not pains afflict his body, sorrows fill his heart, tears flood his eyes, fears weigh down his spirits, and death break in on his sweetest earthly enjoyments, and strip him bare, from time to time, of those who were dear to him as his own soul? And is it not far better to depart from such a scene as this, to be placed for ever beyond the reach of these dangers and afflictions, than to be left to contend with, and perhaps to fall beneath them? So thought the apostle Paul, and so have thought many thousands since his time, and so would I desire to think, and so would I have all who are near and dear to me to think also. Yes, if there be in us any sorrow for sin, any longing after holiness, any faith realizing unseen things, we must thus feel. This is not our rest; and it must not, will not, cannot, satisfy our souls. "To depart and be with Christ is far better."

JULY 24.

"*To depart and be with Christ is far better.*"—Phil. i. 23.

It is far better, not only as it is a complete and eternal escape from all evil, but it is good in the highest possible degree, in that there is so much to be enjoyed when the soul is present with Christ, which cannot possibly be partaken of now. For instance, while we find it delightful to commune with each other, to visit the Lord's children in sickness, to pray, and praise, and converse with them in our poor imperfect way now, how evident it is that it must be far better to commune, and praise, and converse with each other, when we become spirits made perfect in the kingdom and presence of Christ. If it be pleasant now to sit under the word, to approach the Lord's table, and to devote the Sabbaths to holiness, to peace, and spiritual rest, how much better must it be to sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, to partake of the banquet of spiritual refreshments which Christ Jesus himself prepares; and to worship where congregations never break up, and Sabbaths never end! It is good to see the cause of Christ prosper a little in this evil world, and to behold brethren dwell together in something like unity and godly love; but how much better to be where the cause and church of Christ are triumphant, where all are of one heart and of one mind; where love inspires and unites all to each other, and all to Christ in the perfection of angelic bliss! May these prospects refresh my soul every day, and the Lord shall have all the praise.

JULY 25.

"*To depart and be with Christ is far better.*"—Phil. i. 23.

"EYE hath not seen, nor ear heard; neither hath it entered into the thoughts of the heart of man to conceive," how good, how great, how blessed, how complete are those things which the redeemed of the Lord enjoy when they depart hence and are for ever with Christ. Already have our thoughts turned to a few circumstances, and drawn the comparison, and it may yet be a profitable exercise to dwell again on this subject. If there be one thing good beyond all others beneath the sun, it is to enjoy the light of the divine countenance; to be enabled to realize God as our God, reconciled in Christ Jesus, and to believe that we are his pardoned, accepted, and adopted children. This experience is sufficient to produce joy in every tribulation. How much better, then, must it be to stand in the immediate presence of Christ Jesus, and to receive continual communications of his inexpressible love. Oh the unspeakable happiness of feeling and knowing that we are his for ever; and that through all eternity we shall enjoy him as our God and Saviour! And as it concerns those whom we love in the Lord, and who are very near and dear to us in the flesh, when it pleases God to call them hence, and we have to follow them to the grave, it is good to be supported with the confidence of hope that they have only left us for a season, and that soon we shall meet them where death cannot come. But still it is far better to realize that hope, and to exchange that faith for sight: to meet again with those whose absence we now mourn, and to unite with them in praising Him who hath died that we might live, and who hath brought us to himself, and crowned us with glory and everlasting life!

JULY 26.

" By faith I see the land,
The port of endless rest,
My soul, thy wings expand,
And fly to Jesus' breast!
Oh may I reach the heav'nly shore,
Where winds and seas distress no more."

I LOVE to contemplate this life, this world, and all my passage through it, and to compare it to the ocean, and to the mariner urging his way across its troubled and ever-varying waters; and then to consider heaven as being faintly shadowed out by the port or haven where reside the dearest friends and kindred of the voyager, and where his heart and best affections are continually flying, and where he fain would himself be. Oh, my blessed Jesus, now and then

" By faith I see that land,
That port of endless rest."

And every glimpse I am enabled to catch, through the mists and clouds of frail mortality, only serves to endear that land to my soul, and to make me still more desirous to be gone. And can it be that I shall fall short of it? Oh no, for it is God the Holy Ghost who hath given me a desire to depart from sin, and from a sinful world, and to be with Christ, which is far better. I will then endeavour to " expand the wings of faith," and to urge on my course homeward, still trusting

" That I shall reach the heav'nly shore,
Where sins and pain distress no more."

Such is the happy experience of a poor sick and dying cottager I have this day conversed with, and such, O Lord, I pray thee, may be the dying experience of him who writes, and of all who read this page.

JULY 27.

"*The cross!—its burden, O how great,*
No strength but his could bear the weight;
No love but his would *undertake*
To bear it for the sinner's sake."

If angels are intensely desirous of looking unto, and ever admiring the unfathomable depths of this wonderful love of God the Saviour, in undertaking and completing the work of human redemption by his own obedience, sacrifice, and death, how should we, the objects of this unmerited grace and mercy, ever contemplate this love! Oh, thou risen and glorified Redeemer, how shall I express the feelings of my soul when I awake up in thy likeness, and stand in thy adorable presence, and see thee as thou art? At that moment, while all the splendour of thy godhead shines forth, and all the mysteries of thy glorified manhood are seen and understood; and all my own past sinfulness, my infirmities, and imperfections are known and felt in the perfect recollection of every one of them, how shall I acknowledge my boundless obligations to thee, who for my sake, didst humble thyself even unto the death of the cross? Methinks thy very smile will overcome me; yes, thy manifested love would be too much for me to bear, were I not strengthened with that same grace and love to receive and enjoy it. Flesh and blood cannot inherit a glorious heaven; not merely because it is mortal, sinful, and polluted, but because it could not sustain that weight of glory which is reserved for the children of God. Oh, how surpassingly wonderful is this love of God toward guilty man, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us! If this does not constrain our hearts to love him, there is nothing else that can do it.

JULY 28.

" Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."
Rom. iv. 8.

THE amount and value of this blessing can never be known, or ever conceived, until the soul learns it in the full possession and enjoyments of heaven; and when at the same time it will have a perfect knowledge of the nature of hell, and of the sufferings of those whose sins are visited on their own heads. Whatever difference there may be in the sum total of different men's transgression; yet the smallest sinner on earth, if the term may be allowed, is a child of wrath, an object of the Almighty's just and holy displeasure; and as such, with his sins still remaining against him in the records of heaven, he must be excluded for ever from that holy and happy world, and have his portion with condemned spirits in hell. Oh how great then must be the blessing of having our sins borne for ever away from us! Were I ten thousand talents in debt, and without one farthing to pay, and doomed to imprisonment until the whole were discharged, I should, of course perish in prison! but were a prince to come and pay down the ten thousand talents in my name, I should be set free—the law would no longer impute debt to me—it would consider me as owing nothing. So with my soul; if the Lord Jesus atones for my sins, if he satisfies the broken law of God, and makes reconciliation through the blood of the cross, then I am received and treated as sinless; the Lord will not impute, or bring a charge of sin against me, but I shall be received into my Redeemer's kingdom, because he hath loved me, and given himself for me, and redeemed me by his own most precious blood!

JULY 29.

"Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their hearts, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear."
Psalm x. 17.

THESE are great and blessed truths. May the Holy Ghost give us a large experience of them every day. Very often does the humble man fear lest his heart should deceive or betray him; lest he should not continue faithful unto the end. And the enemy often assails him with the weapons of unbelief, with hard thoughts of God, and with the fear of man. Often, like the great Apostle, he feels a law of hostility in his members warring against the law of God; and often, alas, too often, when he would do good evil is present with him. His heart's main desire is to be what the Lord would have him; but because he finds himself falling short in every thing, therefore the accuser tells him, he has no part or lot with the people of God. Now what says the word of truth? "Lord, thou hast heard the desire of the humble: thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear." Yes; although the poor soul cannot rouse courage or confidence sufficient to pray in words, yet the Lord hears the desire of the heart, and this is the best of all prayers. Take courage, then, my soul, when thy lips seem closed, and thou canst only groan within thyself being burthened. The Lord sees and hears the unuttered longings of the soul. He will incline his ear to these heart-felt desires after his grace and Holy Spirit, and the more lowly thou shalt sink in thine own estimation, the higher wilt thou stand in his estimation who resisteth the proud, but giveth his grace to the humble.

JULY 30.

"*This is the confidence we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: and if we know that he hears us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desire of him.*"—1 John v. 14, 15.

LORD, thy mercy is as conspicuous in denying our unwise and improper requests as it is in granting those that are agreeable to thy will. When we pray for health, or increase of goods; for prosperity in our worldly undertakings, or for favour among men; when we entreat thee to fill our cup with gladness, and to make our way smooth before us; to give us the object of our fond desires, or to add sons or daughters to our family; in all these and a thousand other particulars, we know not the consequences of having what we ask. But there are a few things that must be according to thy will, and good for us. Oh, may I have grace to see what these are, and to feel an ardent desire to possess them. At this time I would urge these requests,

"Thine image, Lord, bestow,
Thy presence and thy love,
I ask to serve thee here below,
And reign with thee above.

"Teach me to live by faith,
Conform my will to thine;
Let me victorious be in death,
And then in glory shine.

These are, indeed, invaluable blessings, utterly beyond all human deserts; but they are what I am encouraged and directed to seek, and without which I cannot be happy in myself or glorify thee.—O my God,

"If thou these blessings give,
And wilt my portion be,
Cheerful the world's poor toys I leave,
To them that know not thee."

JULY 31.

"*Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.*"—James v. 13.

Much of human life is chequered with sadness, sorrow, trial, and affliction; intermixed, occasionally, with joy and gladness. In paradise there were none of these conflicting elements, until sin introduced them; and the introduction of sin not only drove our first parents into a world of affliction, but nearly expelled every thing worth the name of happiness from their bosoms. Yet it hath pleased God to dispense even his chastisements to his children in such a manner as to render them subservient to their good; and meanwhile to send them many a refreshing cordial to cheer their hearts by the way. Hence life is a mixed scene of sorrow and gladness, of grief and joy; and here we are instructed how to proceed would we have our sorrows diminished, and our enjoyments sanctified and increased. And much of our growth in grace will be in proportion to our following the Apostle's directions. But oh, how apt are we to neglect this rule of conduct. When affliction bears heavily on us, we are tempted to murmur, to think hard thoughts of God, or to doubt and distrust his faithfulness and love; this we do instead of carrying our burden to his mercy seat in believing, fervent, persevering prayer. And then, again, when cheerfulness and joy light up our path, how apt are we to forget the Lord, and to become light and trifling, instead of pouring out our gladness in songs of praise to him who hath made our hearts merry. Lord, help us to do better for the future, and under every change to seek our happiness in thyself, for Jesus Christ's sake.

AUGUST 1.

" 'Tis sweet to rest in lively hope,
That, when my change shall come,
Angels will hover round my bed,
And waft my spirit home.
There shall my disembodied soul
Behold him and adore:
Be with his likeness satisfied,
And grieve and sin no more."

THERE is no one lawful pleasure or enjoyment in this life that is not doubly relished when the heart and affections are set on things above, and the soul enjoys a lively hope of beholding and adoring its Saviour for ever in heaven. And in the hour of conflict with the powers of darkness, and in the contemplation and experience of our manifold sins, infirmities, negligences, and ignorances, while in the body, what can be so strengthening, so encouraging, as a lively, well-grounded hope of soon awaking up in the Redeemer's likeness? This has been found sufficient, under every present trial and calamity, to administer consolation, and ofttimes to produce songs in the night, and rejoicings in the midst of great tribulation. Lord, may such a lively hope be my happy experience, then shall I partake of all the mercies of health, whenever it is vouchsafed me, and of every smiling Providence with such an enlarged enjoyment as the worldly mind knows nothing of; and as oft as it seems good unto thee that the trials, the sorrows, and sufferings of humanity are again to overtake me, I shall then be enabled to lift up my head with resignation and patience, if not with actual songs of joy, assured that all these things are within the bond of that covenant promise which has ordained all to work together for good to them that love thee.

AUGUST 2.

"*I waited patiently for the Lord, and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings.*"—Psalm xl. 1, 2.

Those who have been called down into the horrible pit, and into the miry clay of mental and bodily afflictions, will know, and such only can know, how great is the blessing of being delivered out of such a state; of having their night turned into day, and their lamentations into songs of praise. Every child of God is not exercised in so deep and solemn a manner; but whether our souls are brought into these depths of distress, these horrible pits, or only tried with the common trials of a christian life, there is but one right and successful way to take; and that is, to wait patiently for the Lord's coming to our relief. Holy and ever-blessed God, many have been the afflictions of most of thy servants, yet hast thou delivered each and all of them out of their troubles, or comforted and supported them under the load. I cannot tell what future events are to mark my course, and I know I am too ignorant to choose my own steps with good to my soul, I therefore would implore grace to leave all in thy hands, with this request, that whatever may be my future trials, I may receive the grace of patience and submission, and be blessed with thy comforting presence, until thou art pleased to bring me forth with a new song in my mouth, even praise unto thee, my God, that those who learn it may see, and fear, and trust in thee the Lord.

AUGUST 3.

"Behold the throne of grace!
The promise calls me near;
There Jesus shews a smiling face,
And waits to answer prayer."

"That rich atoning blood,
Which sprinkled round I see,
Provides for those who come to God,
An all-prevailing plea."

When we consider the fulness of the many great and precious promises given us for our instruction and comfort, and that these are all yea and amen, sure and certain in Christ Jesus, how strange, and how culpable does our unbelieving, our hesitating conduct appear, even to ourselves; and how much more so must it look to those invisible, but ever-present ministering servants of God who are about us for good, and who know how far the goodness and faithfulness of our heavenly Father exceed all we can ask, or think, or hope for! How must redeemed and glorified spirits, made perfect in heaven, look back on their former slowness of heart to believe! And how astonishing must then the long-forbearance of that God and Saviour appear, who continued every day to repeat his goodness towards them on earth, and yet every day to find them so weak in faith to trust him for the future. Lord, help me to do better for the time to come. And, O my soul, blush at thy past want of trust and confidence; surely

"Beyond thine utmost wants
His love and pow'r can bless;
To praying souls he always grants
More than they can express."

AUGUST 4.

"O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is."—Psalm lxiii. 1.

This psalm was written in the wilderness of Judea, where David had fled to escape the rage of his enemies. He was far away from all religious ordinances, from the tabernacle, and the congregation. His eyes saw not the flame or the holy incense arise from the altar at the morning or evening sacrifice, nor did his ear catch the hallowed sounds of praise and prayer, as sent forth by those who stood in the courts of the Lord's house. His own harp was now left behind, and the dearest and most affectionate members of his own family were at a great distance. While almost all his subjects had their home and domestic comforts in possession, he, like his adorable Saviour in after times, had not where to lay his head. He was literally in a wilderness, in a dry and thirsty land, where neither the cooling fountain ran to slake his thirst, nor the divine streams of religious ordinances flowed to refresh his soul. Yet in the midst of all these dark and trying providences he could lift up his eyes towards heaven, and stretch forth his hands towards the mercy-seat of the Eternal, and say, "O God, thou art my God!" What an instance this of the power and blessing of true religion in the soul! While David possessed this self-appropriating faith, he could brave the ingratitude of false friends and the rage and persecution of open enemies, and resign all and every thing into the Lord's hands and disposal. Happy, happy David! May my soul enter deeply into this experience, for Jesus Christ's sake.

AUGUST 5.

" My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: to see thy power and glory, so as I have seen them in the sanctuary."

Psalm lxiii. 1, 2.

HERE the contemplative mind cannot but be struck with the earnestness of the Psalmist's desires after God. His very soul and body were athirst for God, and for a repetition of those manifestations of his love which he had, on former occasions, enjoyed in public worship. No doubt but he had enjoyed many refreshing seasons in private communion and secret intercourse with God in all the changes of his eventful life: but it would seem that the greatest, the most precious manifestations of the grace and mind of Jehovah to his soul, had been imparted during his attendance on God in the sanctuary. It was there that, on former occasions, the clouds and darkness that overshadowed his mind had been cleared away. It was there that his burdened and imprisoned spirit had been lightened and set at liberty. It was there that his understanding had been greatly enlarged, and his heart and affections most lifted up from earthly things, and fixed on those which are heavenly. The word and ordinances of the Lord had been made powerful to his comfort, and the Holy Ghost had revealed to his eye of faith many things which were hidden from sense and sight. The glory, and gracious majesty of the Lord had passed before him, and he had been enabled to contemplate this God as his reconciled God and Father in heaven! These were precious seasons, and his soul longed for their return. But what was all this compared to that tabernacle of God which is in the midst of his loving and rejoicing children, and where they are for ever with the Lord!

AUGUST 6.

"*Thy loving-kindness is better than life.*"—Psalm lxiii. 3.

THIS was David's conviction; and on this conviction he, through grace, acted, and found his soul supported under every trial. But what tongue can speak the value of this blessing, the extent of good contained in the loving-kindness of the Lord? It includes the smiles and blessing of providence on all we have, and on all we do, as connected with the body and with time; the pardon of sin through the merits and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ; the sanctification, the instruction, and the consolations of the soul through the Holy Ghost; peace in death, and glory unspeakable and eternal in heaven! Now each of these particulars is of unspeakable value, and all of them taken together make up a portion of good which eternity will enjoy, but cannot sufficiently praise and express! Well might the Psalmist declare that this was better than life; that is, better than this earthly, temporary life, even when viewed under the most favourable circumstances. For what is human life, when destitute of scriptural hope and of saving grace? In all its pomp and splendour, in all its luxuries, indulgence, and gratification, in all its mirth and revelry, it is still unsatisfying; it is but a fleeting shadow, that soon passeth away and is gone! But the worst of all is yet to be told. Life expended in neglect of the soul ends in everlasting death. Not in ceasing to live, but in living for ever at a distance from heaven, and existing eternally under the righteous displeasure of him whose loving-kindness is the fountain and source of all the joys and raptures of angels, and of redeemed and perfected spirits above. Lord, may I but share that loving-kindness, and I ask no more.

AUGUST 7.

"Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart, all ye that hope in the Lord."—Psalm xxxi. 24.

FEARS and doubts are a part of the consequences of sin; and while they cleave more or less even to the regenerate soul, they sadly retard its pleasant progress, and much dishonour our profession, and grieve the Holy Ghost. Here, however, as on every other occasion, our heavenly Father considers whereof we are made, remembers that we are but dust, and graciously holds out encouragements, and sends cordials and consolations by the way, lest we should be overweary and quite faint in our minds. "Be of good courage," is here the kind command of heaven; and the promise is, that "the Lord shall strengthen our heart." But all this has reference to seasons and circumstances wherein the individual is afraid. And what are these? They are dark, mysterious providences, and times of mental and of bodily distress; they are seasons when we feel or fear the enemy coming in like a flood; when the Lord's countenance seems to be hidden from us, or when death approaches, and the thoughts of judgment and eternity possess the mind. These are all of sufficient importance to distress us, and distress they will, even the stoutest heart, that is leaning on an arm of flesh, or looking to its own resources for strength. But where the individual is hoping in and looking to the Lord, as a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God in Christ Jesus, there is no room to be cast down; nay, there is abundant reason to be of good courage, because the same gracious Lord does preserve the faithful. He goes with them, he leads and guides them by a right way, though at times that way seems dark and mysterious to his children.

AUGUST 8.

"*The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?*"—Psalm xxvii. 1.

With this confidence of faith, and with this cheering light to guide our way, we may set earth and hell at defiance. Indeed, it is simply our want of this faith in the promises of God which leads to almost every fear that harasses and distresses the mind. There is no calamity that can possibly fall in our way but the Lord is fully acquainted with, and can most easily turn aside. And there is not an evil, whether real or imaginary, but suitable and precious promises are given us concerning it; that it shall either be converted into good, or not permitted to reach us. Well may the soul then exultingly exclaim, "Of whom shall I be afraid?" Oh, the inestimable blessing of knowing, by happy experience, that the Lord is our light and our salvation! To know that he has been such in times past; and to be enabled to believe that he will be such in future! Truly, though a host of evil men and of evil spirits were encamped against such an individual, his heart need not fear. Though wars spiritual and temporal were to surround him daily, he need not be afraid. My blessed God, in every time of trouble do thou give me this faith; hide me in thy pavilion: in the secret of thy tabernacle hide me; so shall I be set upon the rock of safety and salvation, and my soul shall praise thee while I live in the body; and it shall,

> "After death, in distant world
> This glorious theme renew."

AUGUST 9.

" *Grace does not steel the faithful heart,*
That it should know no ill;
We learn to kiss the chast'ning rod,
And feel its sharpness still."

THERE are a few well-meaning people who mistakingly consider it a christian virtue to act as much the stoic as possible under bereaving and afflictive providences. This is at once the direct way to lose sight of our heavenly Father's intentions towards us, and of foregoing the benefit these trials are intended to produce. No, the children of God are neither to be exempt from tribulations, nor to be rendered callous and insensible to them; for then they could know little or nothing of the exercise of patience, submission, and resignation. " Ye now," says Christ, " have sorrow." Yes, it is and must be so;

" But how unlike the Christian's tears
To those the world must shed!
His sighs are tranquil and resign'd,
As the heart from which they sped."

And in thus bearing and suffering with humble confidence and submission, believing that all is well, and that joy shall yet succeed to sorrow, he glorifies God in the day of visitation. Whatever carnal sense may dictate, and however painful trials may be to the flesh, yet the understanding is convinced that wisdom and mercy arrange and inflict every pain with the gracious intention of benefiting the soul for ever. Hence, amidst scenes of perplexity, of trouble, and want,

" The Christian would not have his lot
Be other than it is;
For, while his Father rules the world,
He knows that world is his.

" He knows that he who gave the best,
Will give him all beside;
Assur'd that every good he asks
Is evil, if denied."

AUGUST 10.

"*The harvest is the end of the world.*"—Matt. xiii. 39.

This striking emblem of the closing scene of the dispensations of God connected with our world is now going on around us. The harvest is commenced. That period, that season, that grand event in the business of husbandry is now arrived, to which all the various labours of the preceding months of the year had reference. The anxious and provident farmer broke up his fallow ground, and ploughed, and re-ploughed, and harrowed, and picked his land, and prepared it for receiving the seed-corn; and then he sowed that seed-corn, and watched, and weeded, and furthered its progress with this one view, with this one grand and ultimate hope and expectation, of gathering in a ripe and profitable harvest; and the work of reaping and gathering in the produce of the land is held up by our Lord himself as emblematical of the end of the world. Turn back, then, my soul, to the contemplation of this beautiful parable. The fields thou hast this day looked on, and beheld waving thick with ten thousand times ten thousand ears of corn, were some months ago lying barren, naked, frozen, and forlorn; emblematical of the world in a state of fallen, spiritual desolation and death; and such would these fields for ever have remained had not the genial sun returned, and the sower gone forth and sown the seed-corn. And so would our sin-polluted world for ever have lain in a state of utter spiritual winter, had not the Sun of Righteousness arisen upon it in mercy, and sown the good seed of grace in the heart of man.

AUGUST 11.

"*The harvest is the end of the world.*"—Matt. xiii. 39.

The commencement of gathering in the harvest is a work so interesting to every one's feelings in a farm-house, that all parties seem animated with new and strange sensations. They look on each other with a glow of countenance that bespeaks the interested feelings of the heart, as they strike off, one party with their sickles to one field, and another party to another, as the master has appointed them their work. But, go which way they may, their one object is to cut down and gather in the various crops of the fields. So in the morning of the last day. How will the preparations for our world's final and complete gathering in interest all the household and servants of heaven? With what feelings will those pure and happy angels who stand before the throne, and who ever delight to do the will of God, go forth to their allotted task of gathering in, from the four winds of the earth, the elect, and in carrying into full execution the last and closing intentions of Divine Providence, as connected with our earth? Oh, the solemnity, the joy, and sorrow of that day! Then will be mingled together the shouts and hallelujahs of angels and of archangels, with the praises and exultations of redeemed saints; and these again with the cries, the weepings, the wailings, and despair of reprobate angels and of condemned sinners! Joy unspeakable and full of glory will crown the former, and judgment and justice will pour out the cup of wrath on the other, when the angels shall reap the world.

AUGUST 12.

"*The reapers are the angels. As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of the world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*"
Matt. xiii. 39—42.

WHO can stand and look on the busy, interesting, and important labours of a harvest field, and not be interested himself? And what Christian man can stand by and gaze on the reapers, and recollect this portion of our Lord's own word, and not be wrapped in silent, solemn meditation! Lord, I would never pass through or close one day at this peculiar season of the year, without endeavouring to realize to my own heart that great day when my soul and body must be gathered among the good seed, or cast out among the tares. In the harvest-field the reapers find many a thistle, and dock, and other injurious plants growing among the wheat; these evil and pernicious plants are, however, then separated, thrown by, and burnt; never more to mix themselves up among the good grain. So will it be in the end of the world. The evil and the good—the regenerate and the unregenerate —the redeemed and the unredeemed, will be parted for ever. Those who believed in and loved the Lord Jesus Christ, and followed him unto the end, will be gathered together at his right hand, and go with him into his everlasting kingdom; while all others, who did not with their hearts believe unto righteousness, and with their lip make confession unto salvation, will be cast out as things that offend, and which never will be permitted to exist among the children of God in future.

AUGUST 13.

"Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father."—Matt. xiii. 43.

The stacks of corn in the field, and the gaily dressed out harvest-home load of sheaves, are beauteous sights in themselves, when compared to the refuse stubble, and tares, and trash that are left behind to be consumed. But oh, how gloriously resplendent, and how surpassingly beautiful will the collected, redeemed, and glorified children of God appear in the last great harvest-home day of this world, when Jesus, their Mediator, their Sacrifice, their Judge, and their Friend, presents them before the throne of heaven, beautified in his own imparted and imputed righteousness; and how awfully hateful, how horridly miserable will the unsanctified, unpardoned, and justly-condemned portion of the human race then appear! God of all grace and mercy, I would commit myself, and all I have, and all I am, into thine hands, to be made and kept what thou wouldst have me to be. Take away health and human approbation, food and raiment, friends and home among the inhabitants of this world; but give me an interest in the merits and sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, and all will be well. Adorn my soul with the graces of thy Spirit, and exalt me but to the lowest place in thine heavenly kingdom, and I shall be everlastingly happy. Let those whose hearts and affections are set on things below reap a large harvest of such empty and dying fruits, if these things can satisfy them; but may my soul continue to hunger and thirst after thee, even after thyself, O Lord, as its portion, and be daily transformed more into thine own likeness, for Jesus Christ's sake.

AUGUST 14.

"*While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not fail.*"—Gen. viii. 22.

We have had our seed time, and now we have our harvest. Our cold and dreary winter has passed away, and spring and summer have succeeded; and now the occupiers of the land are reaping and carrying in the produce of the soil. It is harvest time, and men's hearts are glad. Many, very many, are exhilirated with the animating business of the season, and rejoice merely in the buoyancy of their animal spirits, without God in their thoughts; while a few are glad at heart as being filled with a sense of the Lord's faithfulness to his promises, and of his abounding mercy and love to guilty men. And now, while this very harvest work confirms the word of the Lord, how powerfully does the beauteous rainbow, which at this season so frequently is set in the cloud, add its visible tokens of the unchangeable truth and faithfulness of the Lord Jehovah! Sweet bow, and sweet season of harvest! my eyes have gazed upon you, and my poor heart has felt a little drawn towards Him whose voice ye obey. Oh, that I could feel as angels do when they gaze, first on the countenance of Him who fills heaven and earth with the majesty of his glory, and then on the "bow in the cloud," and on the reapers in the field, and on all his various tokens of covenant mercy and love to our poor world! Lord, when shall I be enabled to see thee as thou art, and to love thee as I ought!

AUGUST 15.

"He was a Man of sorrows—He
Who loved and saved us thus!
And shall the world that frown'd on him,
Wear only smiles for us?
No; we must follow in the path
Our Lord and Saviour run;
We must not find a resting place,
Where he we love had none."

Much of the disquietude of human life consists of disappointment; and a great deal of this disappointment arises from our foolishly hoping and expecting to gather a harvest of soul-satisfying fruits and enjoyments where none are to be found. The unrenewed and the inexperienced heart are sure to form to themselves many a growing and romantic vision of delight in a world that lieth in wickedness; and to reckon on enjoyments from the creature almost or quite equal to those enjoyed by our first parents before sin marred all their happiness. Even in the young Christian there is much to unlearn in reference to his expectations from the creature and the things of time and sense. It is not an easy thing to see an end of all such perfection. And it is for a while difficult to imagine that the world will continue to slight and scorn us. But if we really are the followers of the Lord Jesus this must and will be. If Christ Jesus has chosen us out of the world, then, on that very account, the world will hate us. Lord, I do not, I cannot love the frowns, and scorn, and contempt of the world for their own sake, yet I would a thousand times over prefer them all, and have my enjoyments in thee, to having all the world can give and not be thy servant.

AUGUST 16.

"Now faith is the substance (the ground, the confidence) of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."
Heb. xi. 1.

And when faith directs the soul to heavenly enjoyments, and is in lively exercise, it is the most powerful of all graces to crucify this world to us, and us to the world. There are two things that make men desirous of leaving this earth; the one is a fretful, discontented, soured, despairing state of mind; the other is a deep sense of the value and a lively hope of entering into the joys of heaven. It is impossible that I can have a lively sense of the happiness and purity of heaven, and feel any thing of a hope and confidence of its being my own future and everlasting home, and yet cling to this perishing and polluted earth. Can I, with faith, behold my dearest friends around the throne of God and the Lamb, and not long to be with them? Can I contemplate the felicity of dwelling in the immediate presence, and of receiving the express tokens of my Redeemer's love, and not feel that it would be far better to depart and be with him? It is when our ideas of heaven are very low, or our hearts are too much secularized, that we are disposed to tarry in the wilderness, and to have our portion on this side Jordan. Lord, give me more exalted conceptions of thy majesty and glory; more angelic, more enrapturing conceptions of those joys which are at thy right hand for evermore. Let my faith give a kind of substance and reality to as much of the nature of the saints' everlasting rest as I am now capable of receiving. Oh that I could realize heavenly things as could the Apostle Paul, after he had been caught up into paradise and saw unspeakable things. (2 Corinth. xii. 2—4.)

AUGUST 17.

"*Be ye also patient; establish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*"—James v. 8.

NOTHING can so compose and tranquillize the soul amidst its present trials and agitations as an established, well grounded faith and confidence in the gospel; and especially of our interest in the salvation of Christ Jesus; and that ere long he will come and take us to himself, that where he is we may be also. This faith can produce in us a sweet resignation under the most unpleasant circumstances, and impart a holy indifference to surrounding things and passing events, while it carries our mind and affections heavenward. "Yes, if I am indeed persuaded there is a state of life infinitely more desirable than the best condition here; if I really do believe there are things attainable by me which are incomparably better than any which this world affords, I cannot but feel a preference to these glorious things, at present unseen, but shortly to be revealed and possessed. If my heart and affections are really set on things above, I cannot fix them on perishing earthly objects; I cannot fix them unduly on things below. If I am one of the Lord's redeemed children, then I am a citizen of the new Jerusalem, and there my chief concerns lie, and not in this world, where I am but a stranger and pilgrim, a sojourner that tarries but a day. Here I have no abiding city—my Lord hath prepared one for me above, where I am to enjoy most noble privileges and most illustrious dignities in the court of the great King." Believing this, I may well be patient under the provocations of this world, and feel it good to meditate on that inheritance reserved in heaven for all who desire their Lord's appearing.

AUGUST 18.

" My Father in mercy reproves;
Instructs me by sorrow and smart;
The veil by correction removes,
And shews me the ground of my heart."

THERE is so much of disorder, so much of perverseness in the fallen heart of man, that ease and prosperity are almost sure to produce a spirit of ingratitude towards, and of forgetfulness of our best Benefactor. Even the real Christian, like good John Bunyan's pilgrim, becomes drowsy as he treads the enchanted ground, that is, the smooth and easy path, and is smiled on by the world, and, perhaps, flattered by his christian neighbours. Oh, how easy is it then to slide into an unwatchful state; to enter into the spirit of those around us; to lose our tenderness of conscience, and to become lukewarm, even while we continue to frequent the means of grace, and to profess great respect for the gospel. In this state of things we must be reproved and instructed, or ruin, sure and certain ruin, will be the result. Blessed God, thou wilt not leave thy children unchastised to perish in this beguiling and dangerous part of their road. The " sorrow and smart" are sent to, and deeply felt by them until they are led to see their conduct in its proper light, to detect the lurking evils of their hearts; to become better acquainted with Satan's devices, and to learn more thoroughly than before, that this world lieth in wickedness. Then they mourn their folly and sin, in departing from the living God; they confess their transgressions; they seek renewing grace; they watch, and pray, and again the Lord smiles upon them, and their souls prosper.

AUGUST 19.

"*For our conversation is in heaven.*"—Philip. iii. 20.

On entering that kingdom, I conceive that my liberated spirit will be prepared thus to soliloquise with itself:

How oft have I long'd, for this kingdom of love,
While conflicting with sin in yon valley below;
How oft have I mourn'd like the heart-stricken dove;
And feared this enjoyment I never should know.

But now, oh, unspeakable riches of grace!
What fulness of bliss, of perfection I've found!
For ever to dwell in this heavenly place!
And worship with those who my Jesus surround!

Farewell then, for ever, to sorrow and tears;
To sins and temptation *for ever* farewell!
Henceforward no more of sad doubts or dark fears:
In the smiles of my visible Saviour I dwell!

All I would be I am—and for ever shall be!
For I know, as by angels and seraphs I'm known:
Unveil'd, my Redeemer Emmanuel I see;
And cast all my honours before his blest throne!

Unawed I can gaze, and rejoice, and adore,
With the raptures of angels and perfected men,
Oh, my cup of perfection, of love, it runs o'er;
Tho' enlarg'd as I drink, it is fill'd up again!

R. M.

In the contemplation of these scenes, how faint and trifling are all the glories and mis-named great concerns of worldly men? How do their riches moulder into dust, and their most coveted delights and enjoyments appear as dreams, empty dreams! Lord, by and by, enable me to realize all thy promised glories; and to serve thee perfectly for ever in that kingdom where I now desire to direct my thoughts continually.

AUGUST 20.

"*Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies.*"
Psalm ciii. 1—4.

It is impossible that words or language can express more cause for gratitude, thankfulness, and love on the part of a poor, sinful, soul-polluted child of Adam than are here expressed by the Psalmist. To have all our sins forgiven; to have the sinful leprosy, the moral, natural, defilement of the soul cleansed and sanctified; to be redeemed from justly merited and everlasting destruction, even at the expense of the sufferings and death of the Son of God himself; and in addition to all this, to be crowned with loving-kindness and tender mercy; to be numbered among those who shall live and reign with Christ for ever and ever! Oh this is indeed such an exceeding weight of grace and glory as must and will for ever astonish every soul that partakes of it. And am I, O Lord, am I encouraged to look up and expect all this as my own portion? Yes, I am; for the language of this sin-pardoning God is, "O every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy wine and milk, without money and without price." The blood of Jesus Christ, I am assured, cleanseth from all sin, "and whosoever will may come unto him; and he that cometh shall in no wise be cast out." Lord, I come, I plead my poverty, my desires, my need of thy precious salvation. Pardon and admit me into the lowest post in thy kingdom, for Jesus Christ's sake, I beseech thee.

AUGUST 21.

" Man may trouble and distress me,
'Twill but drive me to thy breast;
Life with trials hard may press me,
Heav'n will bring me sweeter rest.

" Oh! 'tis not in grief to harm me,
While thy love is left to me;
Oh! 'twere not in joy to charm me,
Were that joy unmixed with thee."

No, my blessed God and Father in Christ Jesus, I do desire and pray that nothing under the sun may ever be permitted to charm or delight my soul, which in its nature and tendency does not bring me, directly or indirectly, to thyself. Neither creature comforts, or worldly ease, or health, or favour among men, or any thing whatever, would I ask or desire to have, unless I have thy graces and thyself in all these gifts to sanctify and bless them to thy glory. And should it please thee to draw my soul near, and to bless it with thy love, while it seems good to thee to permit outward troubles and distress, these trials will then be light indeed; nay, they will be converted into blessings, by endearing thy smiles, thy grace, and thy kingdom to my soul. While the small still voice of the Comforter speaks peace, the world may thunder out its rage and fury, and all shall pass by like the storm that has spent its fury on a distant mountain, and leave my soul unruffled and in peace. Yea, death itself, and all the sorrows, pains, and sufferings that flesh is heir to, cannot make me wretched, so long as thy loving and peace-giving countenance is lifted up on me. Come then, thou Friend and Redeemer of my soul, and walk with me through every future stage of my journey to the grave, and then I shall neither ask what may be the number or the nature of my passing trials, nor shall I fear them in their approach, or sink under them when they fall on my head.

AUGUST 22.

"*Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*"—John xii. 28.

THE *name* is here put for the *attributes* of God: and glorifying his name means the exhibition or shewing forth of the glorious perfection of any or of all these attributes. In the creation of our world, and of all its contents, to say nothing of other worlds, suns, and systems, we have a wonderful display of the power, wisdom, and benevolence of the Creator, extending to the formation and existence of every insect, every animal, and every creature wherein is the breath of life; and of every plant, and flower, and portion of the inanimate works of God. These all speak to his praise: in all these he has glorified his name, and will glorify it again. But in the creation of man in his own image, into whom he breathed a living, deathless soul, and placed over all the other works of his hand, he pre-eminently glorified himself. Nor did he less glorify his attributes of holiness, truth, and justice, in expelling Adam from Paradise, when he ungratefully and rebelliously put forth his hand and ate the forbidden fruit. So likewise, in all his after patient endurance of the multiplied sins and provocations of mankind through all the years of antediluvian iniquity. And further, in those awful but just judgments which opened the windows of heaven, and broke up the fountains of the great deep, and destroyed all things living, except Noah and those with him in the ark; how greatly, in all these, did the Lord glorify his judgments, righteousness, and truth, against hardened and impenitent sinners!

AUGUST 23.

"*Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.*"—John xii. 28.

In further directing our thoughts to the above declaration of the Eternal Father, we must call to mind that day wherein he summoned Noah and his household from the ark, and blessed them, and placed his bow in the cloud, and ordained that beautiful sign as a seal and certainty that so long as the earth remained, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, should not fail. And so, amidst all the renewed sins and provocations of a new world of people did he continue to glorify his forbearance and tender mercy, in sending patriarchs and prophets to instruct and warn mankind to repent and flee from the wrath to come. Thus things went on until the fulness of time had arrived, and the long-foretold Messiah appeared on earth, and the angels of heaven shouted "Glory to God in the highest; on earth peace; good-will towards men." This was the crowning event in all the dispensations of God. Already had the Eternal Father glorified himself, or been glorified in and by the obedience, the ministry, and the miracles of his beloved Son; and, ere long, he would further be glorified in and by the sufferings, atonement, death, and resurrection of the same adorable Jesus. Each of these events would display to men, and to angels, more of the depths and wonders of the judgments, the justice, the grace, and truth of the Eternal Jehovah than had been or could be set forth in any other way. Lord, I would fain think and feel on these subjects as those spirits who are made perfect do, while they stand in thy presence, and behold and partake of thy glory.

AUGUST 24.

"Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."—John xii. 28.

YES, the Eternal Jehovah will glorify himself yet in an extraordinary manner, by pouring out his Spirit upon all flesh. The kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ will yet come on this earth, and men shall be devoted to God in body, soul, and spirit. Christ Jesus shall yet reign and rule in every heart, and God shall be glorified, shall be loved, and served throughout all the world, in spirit and in truth. And then, when the end cometh, and all the plans and dispensations of the Almighty are brought to perfection, and the great day of righteous judgment is ushered in, how pre-eminently will the Lord glorify all his attributes of grace and mercy, of justice, holiness, and truth, in the final sentences and in the future and everlasting destinies then awarded to every child of Adam, and to every fallen angel, including Satan himself. Oh, my God, "I am a worm, and as nothing before thee, and yet I must live for ever." I must stand forth in thy presence at that day, just as though there were not another creature to engage thy notice in the whole universe. And may I humbly hope thou wilt then glorify the riches of thy grace in pardoning and accepting me in thy beloved Son? May I hope that his precious blood will atone for all my sins, and that for his sake thou wilt admit me into thy kingdom? I am altogether a poor worthless sinner; but then thy dear Son is an all-meritorious and sufficient Saviour: I will trust, and not be afraid.

AUGUST 25.

"*The Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered.*"—Rom. viii. 26.

Oh, the helplessness, the infirmities, and the spiritual ignorance that now prevail in the soul of fallen man! How utterly impossible that such a creature, unaided by the grace of heaven, can do any thing really good and acceptable to God! No, for of ourselves we can really do nothing of the sort: but blessed, for ever blessed, be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, for that he hath promised and declared his readiness to give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it. Lord, may I every morning and evening, and every hour of my earthly sojourn, receive out of thy fulness more and more of this precious gift. Let my numerous infirmities plead for this gracious help: let my spiritual blindness and ignorance move thee to instruct and teach me how to pray, and what to pray for; and should my soul groan under its load of sorrows, sufferings, and temptations, and seem on the borders of despair—should I be unable to pray, even when I most stand in need of help, oh, do thou the comforter and upholder of the troubled soul, do thou thyself make intercession, and let the groans and sighs of a troubled, but unexpressed heart, be under thine influence; and thus inspired, directed, and sanctified by thee, may they, through the merits and intercession of the Lord Jesus Christ, enter into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth. Then shall my experience testify, that "He who searcheth the hearts and knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit; doth indeed make intercession for me according to the will of God."

AUGUST 26.

"Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching."

Heb. x. 24, 25.

THE same God who commands us not to murder, does also command us to set our affections on things above, and to comfort one another with his word of promise concerning that kingdom which Christ Jesus has prepared for all them that love his appearing. And the pious Richard Baxter has well observed, that "it is a great pity Christians should ever meet together, without some talk of their meeting in heaven, or of the way to it, before they part. It is pity so much time is spent in vain conversation and useless disputes, and not a serious word of heaven among them. Methinks, (says he) we should meet together on purpose to warm our spirits with discourses of our rest. To hear a Christian set forth that blessed, glorious state, with life and power, from the promises of the gospel, methinks should make us say, 'Did not our hearts burn within us, while he opened to us the Scriptures?' Wicked men can be delighted in talking together of their wickedness; should not Christians then be delighted in talking together of Christ, and the heirs of heaven in talking of their inheritance?" Here, O Lord, as in every other neglect of thy commands, we do ourselves an injury, and rob our souls of those refreshments which would follow a compliance with thy holy word. Pardon, most gracious God, our sins past in this particular, and stir up our souls, that we may exhort and stir up each other's heart to have our conversation in heaven; and so much the more as the day of our departure draweth nigh.

AUGUST 27.

" Jesus, at thy command,
I'd launch into the deep;
And leave my native land,
Where sin lulls all asleep;
For thee I fain would all resign,
And sail to heaven, with thee and thine."

Thus wrote and thus sung the pious author, as he left England for a season, and crossed the Atlantic Ocean to preach the gospel of Christ to poor sinners in America. And thus would I desire to feel and to sing as I quit this world of sin and contention, and launch into the Jordan of death, and encounter all its real and all its imaginary conflicts. To many a soul this is a heart-distressing subject, and through their timid fears of death they are in bondage all their life long. And yet, what is death to him who departs in Christ Jesus? It may, in reality or in imagination, be like the tempestuous ocean. Well, if it is so, yet may the soul who looks to Jesus exclaim,

" What, tho' the seas are broad,
What, tho' the waves are strong,
What, tho' tempestuous winds
Distress me all along:
Yet what are seas, or stormy wind,
Compar'd to Christ, the sinner's friend?

" Christ is my pilot wise,
My compass is his word:
My soul each storm defies,
While I have such a Lord:
I trust his faithfulness and pow'r,
To save me in the trying hour!"

And did any ever thus trust, and find their souls left to sink in the deep waters of despair, or in the waves of destruction? No, they found death was swallowed up in victory, and Jesus and his kingdom theirs for ever.

AUGUST 28.

"Begone unbelief, my Saviour is near,
And for my relief, will surely appear;
By prayer let me wrestle, and he will perform;
With Christ in the vessel I smile at the storm."

How repeatedly does the compassionate and loving Saviour prove the truth of these lines to his waiting, tried, and praying people! Nay it is for this very end that they are often led into deep waters, at once to instruct and humble their hearts, and to convince them of the preciousness of a Saviour's love and mercy. When Daniel was seated in the lions' cold and dreary den, he passed a far happier night than any of those presidents and princes who had conspired his destruction; for there he beheld and tasted the loving-kindness of the Lord in an extraordinary manner, and saw in every softened look, and in every fondling action of those naturally ferocious beasts the tokens of a Saviour's love to his soul, while his persecutors lay stretched on their magnificent couches, destitute of every sense and sign of the divine favour. And thus it will ever be, even as it has been, under all afflictions and trials, when the Lord appears for our relief and consolation. David, concealed in the caves of the rocks, and Paul and Silas chained down in the dungeon, and John banished to the desolate Isle of Patmos; these and ten thousand others were happy, yea, far more happy than any of their persecutors. Lord, may I, under every trying event, be enabled to continue in prayer and faith, waiting thy coming to take the burden off my heart, or to take me from all the burdens to which I am exposed in the flesh, that I may find a resting-place where all sorrow and sin are done away.

AUGUST 29.

"*As deceivers, and yet true.*"—2 Cor. vi. 8.

In all countries, where gold and silver pieces have passed from hand to hand, evil and dishonest men have sent forth counterfeits; and by these base coins have injured many. So, wherever the gospel of Christ has gone, and souls have been really and truly brought to God by its influence, there also hath Satan put forth evil under the guise of religion, and base men and hypocritical professors have done much harm. Yet there is good, sterling gold passing in the market, and there are also true and sincere Christians in the world: this, however, the world very frequently denies; yea, it denied the existence of truth and honesty, even in the Son of God, the Holy One of Israel himself, when he appeared among men. Unblemished by any human infirmities, unstained even by the shadow of sin, infinite in wisdom, and unbounded in goodness, mercy, and truth, as the Lord Jesus was, yet he was stigmatized as the vilest deceiver before his death; and he has, in every age since then, been blasphemously termed an impostor by certain characters and classes of mankind. So, in a measure, it has been, and still is with those who are really his children. There is, and ever will be, in the regenerate heart a sincerity, a simplicity, an honesty of character, both towards God and towards man, which no worldly principles can inspire. There is an earnest desire and labour to have a conscience void of offence in reference to Him who searches the heart, and towards those who can only see the external act. Lord, may I ever bring forth these evidences of a renewed mind, then shall I have that witness and testimony within myself which the world can neither give nor take away.

AUGUST 30.

"*As unknown, and yet well known.*"—2 Cor. vi. 9.

Yes, however paradoxical this language may appear, it is sober, solid truth; and strikingly delineates the character of a real child of God. The great mass of these are either altogether or but very little known to the great, the gay, the rich, and noble of this world. They are a retired people; it is neither their inclination or duty to mix with the sons and daughters of dissipation, of politics, or worldly pursuits, any further than absolute necessity requires. Whatever some may do, who wear the garb, but profane the name of Christ, and still follow the multitude to do evil, the real Christian is not among them. Whether ministers or private individuals, whether rich or poor, their hearts and affections are set on things above, and not on those vain and sinful things on earth which occupy the minds, and engross the affections of the children of this world. A voice from heaven has sounded in their ears, "Come out and be ye separate;" and again it hath said, "The whole world lieth in wickedness;" and again "if any man is a friend of the world, of its prevailing, unscriptural opinions and customs, the same is an enemy to God." Hence there is but little acquaintance between the two parties. Looked on with contemptuous pity or haughty scorn by the world, the servants of Christ live and die unhonoured and unlamented by its children, and are soon forgotten by all its triflers. Be it so; they depart and go to that society they longed after during their sojourn on earth; where they never will cease to praise and glorify God that they were unknown to the world, unseduced by its ways, uncondemned with its children.

AUGUST 31.

"*As unknown, and yet well known.*"—2 Cor. vi. 9.

We have seen how, and where, and why the real Christian is and must be unknown; and now we have to consider him in a very different position, as one who is well known in other quarters and among other pursuits. By those whom the Lord Jesus calls "his friends," "his jewels," "his beloved," and "the excellent of the earth;" the servant of God is well known. And where the best friends of the suffering and ignorant part of mankind meet to consult how they may relieve these sufferings, and inform this ignorance, and deliver the captive, and succour the distressed, and work for the glory of God, and for the present and eternal happiness of mankind; there also the real Christian is well known. He is not seen or known in the noisy, ambitious, and selfish contests of political, revolutionary, and factious assemblies; but he is found where the sons of peace and moral order, of truth and justice, of religion and piety meet together. You find him not in the parks or public gardens, or in any Sabbath day dissipations; but in the temple of the Lord. His face is known at the Lord's table, and among those that keep holy-day. But more than this; he is well known to those angels who are ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto the heirs of salvation; and while these great and glorious beings pass by the most dignified profane characters with holy abhorrence, the humblest Christian, whose heart is right with God, is loved and honoured by them. Lord, may mine be that honour which cometh from thee, for Jesus Christ my Redeemer's sake.

SEPTEMBER 1.

"*As unknown, and yet well known.*"—2 Cor. vi. 9.

THE real Christian, as has been already observed, is not only well known to the people of God, the excellent of the earth, and to the angels who minister unto the heirs of salvation, but he is well known to Christ Jesus, and is known by him in a peculiar sense of grace, of mercy, and of salvation. "I know my sheep," said this adorable Saviour, and, "I give unto them eternal life; they shall never perish, neither shall any one pluck them out of my hands." (John x.) Oh, what a privilege is this! Amidst all the changes and convulsions of the world, and under all the misrepresentations of mankind at large, and through all the hypocrisy and wickedness of false brethren, still the foundation of God standeth sure; having this seal, "the Lord knoweth them that are his." They are known to him as those who have experienced repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; as those who are striving against sin, and hungering and thirsting after righteousness. They are known to him as those whose hearts and affections are in heaven. So intimately does he know and love them, that their names are engraven on the palms of his own hands, and written in the Lamb's book of life. And, although they at present behold him not, yet the time is hastening on when they shall see him as he is, and be made like unto him. Then shall they be well known and eternally honoured and beloved by all the hosts of heaven, as those who were given unto Jesus in time, and who are to dwell with him through all eternity.

SEPTEMBER 2.

"*So shall we ever be with the Lord.*"—1 Thess. iv. 17.

THIS is the summit, the very essence of all heavenly felicity—it is eternal, and it is ever being with the Lord; ever with him who died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. When the ransomed children of men quit the body, and leave this world of dreams and shadows, and awake up in that region of spirits made perfect, whither Jesus their forerunner is gone to prepare mansions for them, they behold him in all his exalted glories, and they are with him where he is, according to his own prayer and his own promise, John xvii. 24, and John xiv. 3. Having esteemed him on earth above all things, and having longed after the sight of his face, "whom having not seen they loved," how will they then rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory? Oh, happy, blessed day;

"For ever to behold him shine,
For evermore to call him mine,
And see him still before me!
For ever on his face to gaze,
And meet his full assembled rays,
While all the Father he displays
To all the saints in glory!

"If nought on earth is half so dear
As his delightful presence here,
What must it be in heaven?
'Tis heaven on earth to hear him say,
As now I journey day by day,
'Poor sinner cast thy fears away;
Thy sins are all forgiven!'"

Yet this is, and must be, as nothing compared to awaking up in his likeness; beholding him as he is; and knowing and feeling that he loves us with an everlasting love, and that we shall love and serve him; and live and reign in his presence for ever and ever!

SEPTEMBER 3.

"*As dying, and behold, we live.*"—2 Cor. vi. 9.

Passing over all the peculiar circumstances of the Apostle and his surrounding children of the gospel at Corinth, we have to consider these words as descriptive of the real followers of Christ in every age, and station, and country. They may all be described, "as dying." Yes, just so far as grace has renewed their souls, are they found "dying" as to their hopes in, as to their expectations from, and as to their desires after things earthly, sensual, and perishing. "They have seen an end of all perfection." Once they were all alive to these hopes, expectations, and desires; they walked according to the fashion and course of this world; they followed the desires of the flesh and of the mind; their hopes, their hearts, their treasures were below; and their cry was, "Who will shew us any good?" "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." And, although year after year continued to disappoint them, still were their hopes, their expectations, and desires placed on the phantoms of a vain and empty world. But it is no longer thus when grace has renewed the soul; a new heart and a right spirit are then found within them. They have, from thenceforth, a new taste, new desires, new expectations, and new pursuits. They see, and really feel, that vanity of vanities is written on all the objects which formerly engrossed their minds. The sins and follies in which they once lived and delighted are now avoided and abhorred; they fear them, they watch and pray against them; they become more and more dead to them, even as the dying man becomes more so in his thoughts, and hopes, and affections, as the solemn and awful things of eternity break on his struggling and departing soul.

SEPTEMBER 4.

"*As dying, and behold, we live.*"—2 Cor. vi. 9.

Not only does the regenerate heart die to the things of the world and of the flesh, as we have already seen, but it also dies in reference to all its former ill-founded views, opinions, hopes, and expectations of heaven and of salvation in general. In days past it had its high and vain confidences of possessing much natural goodness, much inherent strength, much merit and worthiness in the sight of God. "It was alive without the law," that is, it considered itself safe for, and deserving of heaven, because it neither understood the spirituality and extent of the divine law, or its own natural corruptions and actual guilt. But in that hour when grace shone into the soul, and gave it a ray of heavenly light, it began to see that it was "poor, and blind, and miserable, and wretched, and naked." That in itself, that is, in the flesh, there dwelt no good thing—that of itself it could do nothing really good and acceptable to God. All expectations of this kind received a death blow; and although the old Adam was not entirely slain, but showed more or less symptoms of life throughout their earthly sojourn, yet these symptoms became weaker and weaker; they continued to sink into a more complete state of dying, or of spiritual death. And now, O, my heavenly Father, give me thus to die daily. Give me these evidences of thy work of salvation—these tokens of thy love. And, ever and anon, as the dying corruptions within me seem to show signs of revival, do thou subdue them, until they are completely destroyed, and their death is followed up by the everlasting life and enjoyment of the Saviour's likeness and glory in the kingdom of heaven.

SEPTEMBER 5.

"As dying, and behold, we live."—2 Cor. vi. 9.

"SET not your affections on things below, but on things above," is one of those merciful commands of heaven which the children of this world treat with open and unblushing contempt. And yet, the very day in which God the Spirit commences a work of saving grace on the soul, the affections and desires begin to die, and to draw back from the world, and to feel a longing after those things that it once despised and condemned. It now looks to Christ Jesus for its happiness, its daily happiness in this life, as well as for all its felicity in the world to come. It enjoys communion with God in ordinances, in reading, in hearing, and in meditation. It leaves the broken cisterns of human and polluted waters, and goes to the Lord, the fountain of living waters, for all the good it wants or hopes to obtain. In fact, the soul is now alive unto God. It has joys with which a stranger does not intermeddle; it lives in a new element; it enjoys new company; it tastes new pleasures; it directs its steps to a new place, even to the city of the living God. And as it leaves this world of sin and vanity behind it, and hastens in faith and hope, in love and peace after Christ, it has far brighter, better, happier, and holier scenes and pleasures daily cheering and brightening up the spirit than it ever had when it was living unto the flesh and the world. Sometimes, in its conflicts with these adversaries, it may be disheartened, and fears and doubts may prevail; but, after a while, the Lord again comes, and proves himself to be its light, its life, and consolation. And forward again it hastens its way, exclaiming, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." Lord, grant that it may be thus with all who long for thine appearing.

SEPTEMBER 6.

"As dying, and behold, we live."—2 Cor. vi. 9.

As the spirit of God goes on with the renewal of the heart, and the advancement of the soul into more and more conformity to the mind of Christ, that soul still continues to die unto sin, and to all its former unsanctified pursuits, hopes, and desires, and to live unto righteousness, spiritual wisdom, and health, and strength. As it dies to all its former vain and ignorant notions of merit, so is it led to Jesus for a complete righteousness. As it dies to all conceits of its own wisdom, so it increases in the teaching of the Holy Ghost. As it dies to all trust in any supposed powers of its own to resist evil, or to do good, so it grows stronger in the Lord, and in the power of his might. The life that it now lives, it lives by the faith of the Son of God. Jesus Christ is made unto it wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Once it had little more of any spiritual scriptural hopes or desires than a dead corpse; but as the quickening powers of the Holy Ghost are exerted on it, it advances in faith, in hope, in joy, and in peace: it looks back on the world, and contemplates its former pursuits amidst the glare and glitter of its follies and delusions, and can truly say,

> "Its pleasures now no longer please,
> No more delight afford;
> Far from my heart be joys like these,
> Since I have known the Lord."

And now, O my soul, how is it with thee? Art thou one of those "dying" and "living" characters? So far as the subject has been contemplated, hast thou the witness in thyself as thine evening's consolation, that thou art passed from death unto life?

SEPTEMBER 7.

"*As chastened, and not killed.*"—2 Cor. vi. 9.

NOTHING is more certain than that the Lord's children are a chastened people. Let us turn our thoughts to this subject, and remind ourselves of the manner of the divine chastisements, and of some of the reasons why they are sent. First, then, these chastisements are from God, and these very strokes of his rod fall on his children as tokens of his love. "Whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." There cannot be a more awful state in this life than for God to leave us to pursue our own way, and our own will, unchecked and unrebuked. When the Almighty said, "Let Ephraim alone, he is joined to his idols," Ephraim was then but one step from the gulph of perdition, and that step was surely and certainly to be made. We all know, as fully as did the great Apostle himself, that "no chastisement is joyous to the flesh, but rather grievous," yet "it is love that inflicts the pain, that directs the stroke," and that orders all in mercy, whether we can or cannot discern the intentions of our heavenly Father in the visitation. Let us, then, rest assured that there is an absolute necessity for every stroke of his rod, that there is good intended and sent to us in this unpleasant, and, perhaps, unexpected way. Oh, thou gracious God, whom I have so much provoked and sinned against, and from whom I have received mercies new every morning, and fresh every moment, I would bless thee for all my chastisements in times past, and for every season of exemption from them. And now grant, O Lord, that all thy future visitations may produce much of the fruits of righteousness, of faith, and love in my soul, until I land in that happy and blessed world where sin and chastisement are unknown.

SEPTEMBER 8.

"As chastened, and not killed."—2 Cor. vi. 9.

Again let us turn our thoughts to the consideration of the chastisements of the Lord's people, and examine a little into their nature, their intention, and their effects. These, as to their nature, are sometimes afflictions and chastisements in our minds, sometimes in our bodies, sometimes in our circumstances; sometimes they are confined to ourselves, and at other times they fall on those who are very near and dear to us. It may be that we are chastened in the affairs and circumstances of our property and business; this is a frequent case among the Lord's people. They were prospering and accumulating of wealth, and with this prosperity the soul was injured, and, perhaps, in absolutely great danger. Ah, my christian fellow-traveller towards Zion, thou mayest be assured that it is no easy task to carry a full cup with a steady hand. In days of worldly prosperity the soul is imperceptibly, and therefore the more dangerously, tempted to enter into the spirit and fashion of the world; to carry itself too highly before God, and too proudly towards its less prosperous fellow-men; to long for more of those honours and distinctions that come from man, and to hunger and thirst less and less for those that come from God only. Now, when such is the case with one whom the Lord loveth, that soul will assuredly be chastised. Losses, and crosses, and failures, and perhaps real poverty, will be sent, until, like as when a man wakes out of a dream, and all his visions pass away, the poor halting, backsliding soul is aroused, and humbled, and brought back to his heavenly Father in spirit and in truth, and thus enriched with the treasures of heaven for ever and ever.

SEPTEMBER 9.

"*As chastened, and not killed.*"—2 Cor. vi. 9.

We have seen how the chastisements of a heavenly Father frequently are sent to his children in the way of disappointing all their expectations and all their looked-for happiness in the things and possessions of this world's property, lest their prosperity should destroy them. Now let us remember that the afflictions of the body are also among the good and necessary chastisements dealt out to those "whom the Lord loveth." A long course of uninterrupted good health is, no doubt, a great mercy, but in many instances this is undervalued or abused. Hence it is that sickness, and pain, and infirmities of body, are allotted us, partly to correct us, and partly to bless us. It may be that the soul requires this very kind of chastising to convince and humble it for its past want of thankfulness and gratitude. But oftimes the Lord sends this visitation as a timely providence to lay his children by; to house them, as it were, in safety in the inner chamber, from some gathering, some approaching storm of temptation and danger from within, or from without them. Then, again, it frequently is on a bed of languishing that our infinitely wise and compassionate God make us to look back and consider our ways, to understand our errors, and to discover the indecision and lukewarmness of the heart. And here, also, it is that the Lord so mixes up the supporting and cheering manifestations of his presence and love, that the poor sufferer not only can say, "I am chastened, and not killed;" but it can add, "I am chastened in tender love, I am refreshed with sweet consolations, I am able, indeed, to bless the Lord, and say, 'It is good for me that I am afflicted.'"

SEPTEMBER 10.

"*As chastened, and not killed.*"—2 Cor. vi. 9.

Among the various chastisements of the Lord's people must be included those of a troubled mind, those of a wounded and troubled spirit. These constitute the heaviest of all afflictions, and are altogether incomprehensible to all but those who have groaned under the burden. Pains and sufferings of body are frequently hard to bear; but a distressed, a tempted, and despairing state of mind, a sin-accusing conscience, a sense of God's anger, these are strokes that must be felt to be understood. My reader, these strokes may, or they may not have fallen on thee, but they have alighted on many who are now before the throne of God and the Lamb. Yes, among that happy company are not a few who once knew the experience of a state of mental distress, such a state as preferred death unto life: and among the saints of God now living on earth are many who have tasted the bitter cup of a burdened, benighted, self-condemned spirit, that sighs, and groans, and longs, but scarcely dares to pray or to hope for deliverance. Ah, these are indeed the dregs of the cup of trembling chastisement. But even these are mixed and proportioned by infinite wisdom, and sent in mere unmerited goodness and mercy, not to kill, but to make and keep alive. Here let our evening meditations for the present, make a pause, and without, at this time, staying to ask, why are these heaviest of chastisements sent to those "whom the Lord loveth?" let us take our stand on this blessed portion of the Lord's word, and hear it say, as from the lips of Christ Jesus himself, "What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter."

SEPTEMBER 11.

"As chastened, and not killed."—2 Cor. vi. 9.

In our last meditations on this passage we noticed those severest of all trials and chastisements, the afflictions of the mind, the troubles of a wounded and broken spirit; and these we saw did occasionally form a part of the real Christian's conflicts. But why should they feel so distressing a rod as this? Because the Lord sees there is a necessity for it; and because this is, in the nature of things, the most suitable to bring about the kind intentions of a heavenly Father. In general, though not always, this chastisement falls on individuals who have forsaken the Fountain of living waters, to hew out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water. They have drawn back and apostatized; they have ceased to watch and pray; they have fallen an easy conquest to the tempter; they have given the enemy cause to blaspheme. They have, in short, grieved the Holy Spirit. For some of these things, the Lord hides for a season his face from them. Their day is turned into night, their joy into mourning, and they are made to feel how bitter a thing it is to depart from the living God. Perhaps they have so idolized their partners, their children, and friends, as to leave but a secondary place for the Lord in their poor divided hearts. And then, as a punishment, and as a corrective blessing, these idols are taken away, or, if suffered to remain, they are permitted to become sore thorns in the flesh, scourges, rather than comforts, and deep and frequent causes of sorrow, rather than of joy. These are sharp, but necessary chastisements! God is a Spirit, and his children must give *him* the heart, and worship him in spirit and in truth.

SEPTEMBER 12.

"*As chastened, and not killed.*"—2 Cor. vi. 9.

Oh, how kind and gracious in our heavenly Father, that he will not withhold those chastisements which he sees his poor wayward children require, but that, on the contrary, he will so visit their sins with his loving corrections, that, in the end, their souls shall be made great: that for a small moment he hides his face from them, that with everlasting mercies he may gather them. How solemnly, and yet how mercifully, did he thus visit and chastise David, and Hezekiah, and Manasseh, and Jonah, with a host of others, among the saints of former days. Paul himself had a thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan to continually buffet him; for even the abundant revelations which Christ had made to him, called for this very trial to keep him humble. Oh that we may profit, as we ought to do, by these failings and chastisements which are written for our learning, and be so led to watch and pray that we fall not into the like condemnation. And whenever the chastisements of a distressed, a dark, a deserted state of soul, lay us in the dust, and almost in despair, may we turn unto the Lord with all the simplicity and sincerity of penitent and contrite children, and then, continuing to confess our sins, we are assured that the Lord will be merciful and gracious to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. It must thus be by submissive conduct under the rod, and by faith and perseverance in prayer, that we must wait the return of that blessed Comforter, who for our sins has been justly displeased, and who in righteous anger has hidden his face from us.

SEPTEMBER 13.

"*As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.*"—2 Cor. vi. 10.

To the carnal man this appears a clear contradiction in terms. In the experience of the Apostle, and of the Lord's people generally, it is found to be literally true. They have much cause for sorrowing, and much for rejoicing, and they actually do sorrow and rejoice frequently at the same time. But how is this? They have sorrow of heart on account of the remains of sin within themselves, on account of this enemy within the camp, this adversary that wars against the soul, and which made even Saint Paul himself to groan under the burden. Then, as concerning the state of the world at large! What cause of sorrow is here found on every side? Who, with the heart and understanding of a child of God, can contemplate the wretchedness and misery produced by sin in times past, and still producing, in a thousand different ways, to the dishonour of God, and to the destruction of mankind, but must sorrow over what he sees and hears? On one hand, he meets with open blasphemy, and infidel, atheistical rebukes; on the other, with hypocrisy and scandalous conduct among professors of the gospel; then the follies, the prejudices, and mistakes of good men, and the low standard of character and of spiritual attainments observable among churches and congregations in general! These things, to say nothing of our own bodily or domestic afflictions, are quite sufficient to produce sorrow in the bosom of any child of God; and they do more or less produce it. Jesus himself, in his human nature, was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Nor would I pray to be exempt myself. All I desire is, that I may have rejoicing in the Lord.

SEPTEMBER 14.

"*As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.*"—2 Cor. vi. 10.

Yes, although the children of God have many causes of sorrow, yet have they their rejoicings also. Not always triumphing, or in the same flow of spirits, or in the same joyfulness of hope in their own experience; nor are they all equally happy, or equally strong in faith with each other. In all these things there is a great difference. This much, however, is certain, that all who are led by the Spirit, and partake of the promised Comforter, do, even amidst all the sorrows that waylay them, experience more or less of the cheering presence of God their Saviour. They are never left wholly unsupported, and on many occasions, in the midst of their sorrows, the divine Comforter delights their soul! At times they can sing, "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom then shall I be afraid?" Faith, in its bright and cheering visitations, can produce all this, and hope can look beyond the present gloom, and see and realize better things to come. In short, the people of God have found joy and peace in believing, which all the sorrows and sufferings of the passing hour have not been able to do away. There are given unto them many great and precious promises, that by these they might have such a hope as maketh not ashamed; and this hope they do really enjoy. The same Scriptures continue daily to open to them new, and bright, and blessed scenes yet to be enjoyed, and faith gives the soul power to lay hold of them: and thus does the Holy Ghost communicate joy and peace.

SEPTEMBER 15.

"*As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.*"—2 Cor. vi. 10.

STRANGE as this may read in the ear of a child of the world, yet it is true. We lately glanced at some of those many things that bring sorrow to the Christian's heart. But what of them all, if so be the Lord do but lift up the light of his countenance upon us? What, though there be an enemy in the camp, a thorn in the flesh, a messenger from Satan to buffet us; yet the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ is all-sufficient! What, though the state of mind of the world be morally dark and wretched in the extreme; yet faith looks forward in joyous assurance that the day is coming, when it shall be as happy as it is now miserable; a time when none shall hurt or destroy in all the holy mountain; when none shall blaspheme or deny the Lord Jesus; when all ranks and orders of men shall be holy unto the Lord; and all the mountains of opposition, of unbelief, and sin of every description, shall be brought low; and when this spiritual wilderness, now so barren and void of all good, shall blossom as the rose. These are joyous themes for the Christian to meditate on; they refresh his spirits, they cheer his heart, and send him on his way rejoicing, even in his tribulations. He knows there is a time coming when the church of Christ in every part of the earth shall be what it ought to be; a time when one professed disciple of Christ shall no longer betray, deceive, or injure another, and then comes the end; when he shall find himself where neither sorrow, or pain, or sickness or separation, or death, can ever come, but where Jesus makes all things new. In the believing anticipation of these things, the sorrowing Christian can still rejoice, in hope of the promised peace and glory of God.

SEPTEMBER 16.

"*As poor, yet making many rich.*"—2 Cor. vi. 10.

MANY of the Lord's children are literally poor in this world; many of them will continue to be so to the end of time. But this poverty has nothing in itself to commend them to the favour of heaven, any more than the riches of the world have. It is a spiritual poverty, which, in every soul's experience, is the feature well-pleasing to God. "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Now, every apostle of old had, and every saint at this day, has this poverty as one of his marks of honour, as one of many tokens that he is a citizen of heaven. They all know enough of the word of God, and enough of their own selves, as set forth in that faithful record, to feel assured that every grace and excellency cometh from the Lord; and that none can ever be found naturally in themselves. Whatever they once thought of themselves, and whatever others thought of them, as being meritorious, and rich before God, their own deep conviction, their own heart-felt exclamation now is, "Lord I am unclean and vile in thy sight." "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." "In me, that is, in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing." And so far as any soul advances in grace, and discovers on one hand something of itself, and on the other some little more of the glory and power, the purity and holiness of God its Saviour, it sinks lower and lower in its own esteem, it sees more and more of its own spiritual wretchedness and poverty, and consequently it is still increasingly prepared to enter into the spirit of that song, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy name be all the praise."

SEPTEMBER 17.

"As poor, yet making many rich."—2 Cor. vi. 10.

The Apostle and his children in the gospel were literally poor in worldly circumstances; for they forsook all they possessed, or they had it taken from them by violence and persecution, when they declared themselves on the Lord's side; but that which most distinguished and honoured them in the sight and estimation of heaven, was that poverty of spirit which, in the sight of God, is of so great a price; and as a peculiar token of divine grace and approbation, they were ordained to be instrumental in making many rich. And so, in a lower sense, and in a more humble degree, has the same Author of all grace put this honour on his children in every age. First, he has blessed them with that poverty of spirit we lately meditated on; and then he has used them as his instruments to go forth and enrich others, by imparting to them those glad tidings of great joy through which they themselves have been brought to seek, and through grace, to obtain an inheritance which is incorruptible and undefiled, and that passeth not away. Nor has this honour been confined to ministers and preachers; there never was a truly humble and loving follower of Christ on earth but was a blessing to mankind; not one devoted follower of Jesus in the situation of parent, or master, or mistress, or child, or servant, but has been, more or less, the instrument of benefiting some of their fellow creatures, by saying or doing something which the Lord has owned and blessed to the good of their never-dying souls. These instruments may not always understand or see what the Lord is thus doing by them, but what they know not now, they will know hereafter.

SEPTEMBER 18.

"*As poor, yet making many rich.*"—2 Cor. vi. 10.

When the Lord is pleased to work by the instrumentality of poor feeble mortals for the spiritual good of others, he wonderfully accomplishes what the Apostle here speaks of as making them rich: and when the Holy Ghost fits and sends forth men to preach the gospel in simplicity and truth, he puts his own seal to the work, and many souls are brought to glory. These heralds of salvation may be held in little estimation by many, because they possess no earthly riches or titles; but they are ambassadors for Christ; and God does by them beseech men, in Christ's stead, to be reconciled to himself. (2 Cor. v. 20.) They come in the Lord's name, with rich consolation, with offers of mercy, pardon, peace, and eternal life. It is by such ministrations that God snatches many souls from everlasting destruction, and fits and prepares them for endless glory. Hence it is that the ministers and messengers of the word of God do, as instruments, make many rich—rich in that wisdom which makes wise unto salvation—rich in that hope which makes not ashamed—rich in that faith which purifies the heart, works by love, and overcomes the world—in short, rich in an interest in all that the Saviour did and suffered to bring many sons unto glory. Lord, grant that all who ever read these lines may be thus enriched. May every one of them be thus led to seek and find the pearl of great price. Bless the labours of all who speak and pray for the instruction and warning of the ignorant and profane part of their neighbours, their families, or their flocks; and thy name shall have all the glory, through Jesus Christ.

SEPTEMBER 19.

"*As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.*"—2 Cor. vi. 10.

The real Christian is, and ever has been, a person "wondered at." And here again his state and character are described in terms that appear altogether unintelligible to the world. He is said to "have nothing," and yet "to possess all things." We have seen how he very frequently is poor in all his worldly circumstances, and how he is always poor in spirit, having no fancied merit, or moral worth, or spiritual riches of his own; but that he sees and feels himself a poor guilty condemned sinner, meriting nothing at the hands of God but punishment. And now we have to look on this very person as one who "possesses all things," as one who is rich indeed. But how is this? He is a partaker of that rich grace of God, which bringeth salvation, through faith, in the Lord Jesus Christ. He has an interest in what Christ Jesus has done and suffered for sinners. The Holy Spirit has convinced him of sin, righteousness, and judgment; and the superabounding grace of God has adopted him into the family of heaven. It may still be his lot to pass through this world as poor as was Lazarus, when he lay at the rich man's gate; he may be a pauper in a parish poor-house, or living on the daily charity of his surrounding neighbours; but if he is a partaker of the grace of God—if he has known repentance towards God, and is living under the influence of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, then he is possessed of riches that the world cannot give or take away. He, in fact, is one of those of whom the Lord of Hosts thus speaks—"He shall be mine in the day that I make up my jewels." (Malachi iii. 17.)

SEPTEMBER 20.

"As having nothing, and yet possessing all things."
2 Cor. vi. 10.

When the converting, sanctifying, and saving grace of God comes home to the poor destitute sinner's heart, he may well be said "to possess all things." Oh, that our souls were more alive to the unspeakable value and boundless extent of these blessings and privileges! Does any one ask what these "all things," these blessings and privileges are?—we can only conceive and speak of them very imperfectly—for, in fact, all the dispensations of grace and of providence; all the graces and gifts of the Spirit; all the comforts and blessings of the christian ministry; all the services of those angels who are sent to minister unto the heirs of salvation; all the love of a covenant God and Father; all the merits and intercession of God the Son; and all the consolations of God the Holy Ghost; and, finally, all the enjoyments and glories of the kingdom of heaven; these are a part of the rich possessions of God's children. They have now the riches of the grace of God in the experience of the love of his Son Jesus Christ; and they have only to wait a little longer, and he will come and receive them to himself. They are now called to the possession of a faith that realizes unseen things, and shortly this faith will be lost in sight; they are now called to a hope which is full of immortality, and soon they will have all, and more than all they ever hoped for. Yes, they will have such things as eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the thoughts of the heart of man to conceive. Under these circumstances they may look forward and exultingly exclaim, "Having nothing, yet we possess all things."

SEPTEMBER 21.

"*I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*"—John iv. 32.

By these words our blessed Lord meant, that he had mental refreshments which so completely occupied his thoughts, so refreshed his spirits, that his human nature was ready to forego and forget its accustomed supplies of perishing food; and, to a certain extent, this is the case and experience of every intelligent and spiritually-minded follower of Jesus. But what may we suppose were the scenes, the circumstances, and events that occupied the Redeemer's thoughts so interestingly, so affectionately occupied them as to become food to his soul, and withdraw, for a season, all his thoughts and desires from animal support? That heaven which he had, for the present, left, and all the scenes, the joys, the happiness, holiness, and love which filled, and ever would fill, that blessed world; these could not be absent from his contemplative mind as man, or even out of his sight as God. His Godhead would see and realize the whole, and his sinless human nature, filled as it was with the unmeasured fulness of the Holy Ghost, must be able, and could not fail to have its meditations there, and these meditations could not but be sweet! Oh, what a contrast must these contemplated scenes of joy, and gladness in that world of happiness and love have formed with things around him! In one word, he had all the interesting scenes of heaven, and all the distressing scenes of earth present in his thoughts, and these, as it were, drew off his mind from the thoughts and concerns of bodily refreshment. And thus it is with his saints on earth at this day, in proportion as they realize and rejoice in unseen things in heaven, and mourn over the desolations of sin on earth.

SEPTEMBER 22.

"*I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*"—John iv. 32.

We may further consider these words as meaning that the reflections and scenes then passing through our blessed Lord's mind so fully engrossed his soul as to shut out, in a measure, the thoughts and desires of bodily refreshments. These meditations were, so far as we have endeavoured to pursue them, of a mixed nature, partly joyous and partly afflictive. The world into which he had visibly come, and the Jewish and Samaritan people among whom he more especially dwelt, presented a dreary spectacle of selfishness, arming man against man, and filling all ranks, not only with envy and hatred towards each other, but with enmity and rebellion against God. In fact, our Lord beheld himself in a world of sinners, who were warring against their Maker, and rejecting their only Saviour. Judea was the only spot on the whole earth where any thing of the true God was correctly known, yet this nation received not its Redeemer; and as to the whole world beyond the limits of Judea, it lay in the grossest ignorance of God that was possible. Foolish, sottish, impure, and bloody rites formed the religion of Romans, Grecians, Egyptians, and of every civilized, and of every savage people. Now it was impossible but that all this must be present to the Saviour's thoughts. And, again, let us think what a contrast must this have formed to the joys and perfection of heaven! He who had left heaven, and who, as God and man in one Christ, still realized all heaven to his mind, must have seen and felt the contrast in a degree of intenseness that none else could do. No wonder, then, that in these mental exercises the Lord Jesus should say, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of."

SEPTEMBER 23.

"*I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*"—John iv. 32.

We have presumed to hint at some of those subjects which engaged the attention and occupied the thoughts of our beloved Saviour, and we may safely and profitably pursue the subject yet further. The glorifying of his blessed Father on earth, and the accomplishment of the work he came here to do, in the redemption of his people, were never absent from his thoughts or his heart. So, likewise, that glory which human redemption would bring to God, and the unspeakable felicity it would secure to myriads of the human race, were themes and subjects on which his thoughts and meditations could never cease to bring into continual review. Indeed, these were the very things which cheered his soul amidst all the scorn and cruelty, all the contempt, the blasphemy, and persecution that daily awaited him. The struggles, conflicts, and sorrows; the joys, the temporary defeats, and the final victory of his church on earth, and of every individual member of that church, must also have passed and repassed before his contemplative mind in all their vividness, and in all their consequences. Nay, the very disciples now standing before him with their basket of perishing meat, had, no doubt, been in his thoughts and on his heart. At one glance he could see every coming event that would hurt or benefit them; all that, through grace, they would do, and bear, and suffer for his name's sake; all the services they would perform for man, and all the pains and sufferings they would encounter in their work of preaching the gospel; all were seen, all were present to his mind, and so intensely engaged his heart, that he could say, "I have meat to eat that ye know not of."

SEPTEMBER 24.

"I have meat to eat that ye know not of."—John iv. 32.

We are told, that in consequence of the joy set before our blessed Redeemer in the completion and result of his working out salvation for his people, he endured the cross and despised all the shame and contempt heaped upon him. And no doubt but that joy had been his refreshment during the absence of his disciples. While they were in the city purchasing food for the perishing body, the Lord had been ruminating on those better days which were to bless this world with a great and general supply of the bread of life; those better days when the yell of the blasphemer would give place to the songs of Zion, and the then ignorace of all nations would be succeeded by spiritual wisdom and understanding; when the nameless, numberless crimes of idolatry, infidelity, popery, and all the soul-polluting and soul-destroying heresies and systems of man's devising would give place to the faith and practice of the gospel; and when light, and joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost would eventually reign, where then darkness brooded and misery held undivided empire: those better days when peace should flow down as a river, and righteousness should extend itself, even as the waves of the sea; when swords should be beaten into ploughshares, and spears into pruning hooks, and men should learn war no more: those better days when none should hurt or destroy in all God's holy mountain, but when the earth should be full of the saving knowledge of the Lord, even as the waters fill the great deep. Yes, these events were to constitute a part of the joyous results of his obedience, his sacrifice, and death, and they constituted a joyous theme for his continual meditations; and in mentally dwelling upon them, his soul had meat to eat that his disciples knew not of.

SEPTEMBER 25.

"*I have meat to eat that ye know not of.*"—John iv. 32.

In the hour of lonely meditation, during the absence of his disciples, we may be certain that our Lord's own approaching sufferings and death could not be absent from his thoughts, and that these were things that must have excited deep and intense interest in him who was to drink this bitter cup alone, even unto the dregs. He who knew the end from the beginning, and saw the future equally distinct as he saw the present and the past, could not but know all the buffetings, mockings, scourgings, and indignities that awaited him at the hands of Pilate and his soldiers, and at the hands of Herod, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and rulers of the people, as well as at the hands of that ungrateful people themselves, who would shortly return all his kindness with cries of "crucify him," "crucify him;" all that awaited him through every hour and every stage of his mournful sufferings from man, and all of those agonies to be passed through when justice should lay on him the iniquities of us all; even all of these must have been distinctly before him, they could never be wholly absent from his thoughts. He knew that the sun would be shrouded in darkness, that the earth would be convulsed, and its rocks rent, and that many of its graves would be opened. He foresaw the tragic scenes of Gethsemane, and the treachery of Judas, and the denial of Peter, and the desertion and flight of all his disciples; and all those waves and billows of sufferings and sorrow that for a time would pass over his body and soul as he should hang on the cross; and yet, in the view and recollection of all these things, his soul was feeding with delight on the blessed results of all he should do and suffer in bringing many sons unto glory.

SEPTEMBER 26.

"I have meat to eat that ye know not of."—John iv. 32.

The final result of the humiliation and sufferings of the Lord Jesus Christ in the glorification and everlasting happiness of his redeemed children, must at all times have been the subject of his thoughts, and the theme of his greatest joy. And now, sitting alone by Jacob's well, may we not justly suppose that these things formed a part of that mental food on which his soul fed during the absence of his disciples? From a view of the hills and vallies then around him, would not his eye, that could look into the future, behold the end of all these temporal and material things, and see the dead, small and great, stand before his own judgment seat? Would he not behold Satan and sin for ever confined to their own place; and the church, so long militant here on earth, become a church triumphant for ever in heaven? Yes, and in the anticipation and foreknowledge of these events, he would see all the divine plans of Providence and grace completely fulfilled. And all the whole family which the Father had given him, he would behold, in contemplation, as brought safely through all their wilderness journey, and landed in the promised Canaan of heaven to go out no more. In sweet contemplation, his soul would feed on the happiness of that day when he should have finished the work of redemption, and have delivered up his mediatorial kingdom to God the Father; and when, "in the dispensation of the fulness of times," all should be gathered together in one, as well "those which are in the heavens as those who ever had been on the earth." Yes, in anticipation, he would behold the day when all these should be assembled as one family; and all be glorified and blessed in himself as their head for ever and ever.

SEPTEMBER 27.

"*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*" Phil. ii. 5.

"*To be spiritually minded is life and peace.*"—Rom. viii. 6.

Our thoughts have been, for some evenings past, turned to those subjects which probably, nay, as to many of them, which certainly formed the subject-matter of that mental interest and soul-satisfaction which our Lord described as the meat he had to eat which the disciples knew not of. And now, are these the themes of our frequent and deeply-interesting meditations? They certainly will be so, if we possess any tolerable portion of an intelligent and spiritual mind. And although our meditations on these things cannot make us insensible to our bodily wants and necessities, yet they will be sweet and refreshing to our souls, especially in the hour of solitary rambling abroad, or of lonely musings at home. Oh, how light and trifling do most of those things which occupy and amuse the world appear to a person whose heart and conversation are in heaven! How vain and foolish many of those pursuits which pass in this world as things of great value and worthy of striving after. Alas, most men form an estimate of things by the rules of earth instead of the rules of heaven. And, as the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, and as many things which are highly esteemed by men are held in abomination by God, how necessary is it that we should strive after the same mind, the same view, and the same estimate of things on earth, and of things in heaven, that our Lord and Saviour himself had. Without this mind we have no scriptural evidence of being his children, and without this evidence we shall never enjoy the happy experience of life and peace in our souls here, or be in a state of preparation for entering on the scenes and enjoyments of heaven hereafter.

SEPTEMBER 28.

"*Fight the good fight of faith.*"—1 Tim. vi. 12.

"WITHOUT faith it is impossible to please God," and without faith it is also impossible to overcome the world, for "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John v. 4. The Christian's life is here compared to that of a soldier's, and his conflicts with the world, the flesh, and the devil, do indeed constitute a solemn and an arduous fight, in which he either becomes victor, and receives a crown of life, or is defeated and cast down to destruction. Now the nature and character of this conflict, or, rather, of the grand principle that actuates and carries the christian soldier through, is that of *faith*. It is this grace which acts as a cordial to the fainting spirits, and puts new vigour into our prayers and exertions, and sends us forth strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. Oh, this precious faith! it looks to an unseen world, and beholds an unseen Saviour; it tells us how vile we are by nature, and it carries us, in hope and confidence, to a heavenly Physician; it makes us hear and believe that we must crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts, and it gives us strength and power to do so; it shows us ten thousand difficulties that are to be surmounted, and enemies that are to be engaged, and crosses that are to be taken up, and afflictions that are to be borne; and it leads us to Him who is ready and able to impart every instruction and assistance, every grace and consolation, to make us more than conquerors. Oh, thou God of all grace, thou author and finisher of faith, bless me thy poor, unworthy servant with large and increasing portions of this faith, that so my heart may be daily more purified, and that the principle of love may constrain me to do thy work, and enable me to overcome the world.

SEPTEMBER 29.

"*Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life.*"
1 Tim. vi. 12.

In carrying this injunction into practice, in contending against our threefold enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, in reliance on those aids which the Captain of our salvation has promised us, we shall most assuredly obtain the victory. But we must ever bear in mind, that the present life is a warfare, and that the fight has to be maintained up to the very time of our departure. Nor must it be forgotten, that on many occasions we may be much put to it in this battle. There is no safety, no room to expect one victory, any longer than we are looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, for fresh and fresh supplies. We must endeavour to keep the promises in remembrance on all occasions, and determine, by the Lord's strength, to act upon them in a believing confidence of their being accomplished in our behalf. When the enemy comes in like a flood, we must wait on the Lord in fervent, believing prayer, for him to lift up the standard of his almighty arm in our defence. When the heart is overwhelmed, we must, in faith and prayer, fly unto Jesus, "the rock that is higher than ourselves." When Satan accuses, when the law condemns, when men persecute, when friends die, or cease to be kind, when streams of ordinances fail, when sickness brings its languor and disease on the body, and when death arrives to dismiss the spirit, in each and all of these seasons we shall need to pray, and not to faint, to believe and rest on the word of an unchangeable God; and thus, fighting the good fight of faith, we shall lay hold on eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SEPTEMBER 30.

" My Father sits on yonder throne,
Amidst the hosts above:
He reigns throughout the world alone,
He reigns the God of love.

" He knew me when I knew him not,
Was with me, though unseen;
His favours came to me unsought,
His love has wondrous been."

And canst thou, O my soul, adopt this as thine own language, and as thine own experience. Yes, my adorable Lord and Saviour, it must be so, or I can find no truth in the Bible. That I am a poor, worthless sinner, falling short in every duty, and in the exercise of every grace; and that I daily and nightly require a renewed pardon and cleansing, cannot for one moment be doubted; but that I do desire to be thine, and thine only, I am sure of, if I am sure of any thing. That thou didst care for, and watch over me, when I knew thee not, is equally certain; that every day of my past years of rebellion and contempt of thy word and commandment was a day made up of favours and mercies to my soul and body I must own and confess, were I even in hell itself. May I not, then, with all humility, but with all confidence, add,

" Thou keep'st me now, securely keeps,
Whatever foes assail,
With vigilance that never sleeps,
With powers that never fail."

Yes, for whom thou lovest, thou lovest unto the end; thou changest not, but art the same yesterday, to day, and for ever; this it is

" Which gives me hope that I shall be,
Ere long, with thee above;
That I shall all thy glory see,
And celebrate thy love."

OCTOBER 1.

" Oft have I seen the laughing spring
Shed her rich blessing o'er the earth,
While born beneath her fragrant wing,
Sprung beauty forth, and love, and mirth.

" But spring soon fled, and summer then
Her genial heats diffused around,
And nature's wildest, roughest glen
Was by her hand with verdure crowned.

" Sweet summer, too, alas! was doom'd
To quit the rich and smiling plain;
For while in fruitfulness she bloom'd,
Autumn began her glorious reign."

October has now arrived, and all its quiet serious aspect begins to spread over our country. The fields are cleared of their grain, the orchards are stripped of their fruits; the trees have lost their deep bright richness of green, and all things begin to remind us that winter will soon be here, and that the present year will soon arrive at its close. Still the sky is clear, the elements are calm, the sun is warm, and the air is refreshing. Lord, grant that it may be thus with all who seek and all who love thee, if spared to enter into the autumnal season of human life. While we see and feel ourselves stripped of many a gay and sportive quality of younger days, may a sobriety of heavenly wisdom and a cheerfulness of christian hope still lead us forth to enjoy the ordinances of thy house, and the society of thy children. Thus shall we pass into the finishing portion of our sojourn on earth without fear or repining, and, through grace, we shall stand prepared for all thy future will and pleasure, humbly hoping that, " for us to live is Christ, and to die will be gain."

OCTOBER 2.

"Methinks I stand upon the rock
Where Baalam stood, and, wond'ring, look
Upon the scene below:
The tents of Jacob goodly seem,
The people happy I esteem,
Whom God has favoured so."

With the Bible for our instructor and guide, and with some experience of the grace of God in our own hearts, and some real knowledge of mankind in general, it is impossible but our views and opinions of men, and of most things, must widely differ from those of others who reject that instruction and guidance to follow the lessons and the opinions of the world. While there are many labours and pursuits necessary and laudable; and while there are many bounties of providence which may be sought after, and enjoyed with thankfulness, there is yet one great and paramount object that should never be lost sight of, or be admitted to hold a secondary place in our desires and pursuits, and that is the salvation of the soul. To know and to enjoy Christ as our portion, is to possess the highest wisdom, and to be enriched with the truest riches. When I glance at those children of pleasure (falsely so called,) driving about our parks, or parading to the sounds of martial music before our palaces of royalty on the Lord's-day, and leave these scenes of fashionable dissipation, folly, and profaneness to go with those who are assembling "to hear, and sing, and pray," in the house of God, I cannot but feel where the approving smiles of the Almighty rest, and where his frown is going forth. On these occasions I can be at no loss in saying who are the wise and honourable, and who are the reverse.

OCTOBER 3.

"*He is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God.*"—Rom. ii. 28, 29.

MEN, in every age, have been greatly inclined to honour the forms and externals of religion; and to neglect and despise the power of godliness in the heart. The former carry with them much of the pomps and vanities of this evil world; they bring down the notice and approbation of mankind; they tend to exalt the worshipper in his day and generation, and to fill him with high conceptions of himself: but the latter is a quiet, humble, retired walking before God; and its best services are those which no eye looks upon, nor any ear listens to, but those of him, unto whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid. But these persons, however approved of God, are despised, and frequently persecuted of men; often they are poor and afflicted in their bodies and circumstances, and always are they the objects of Satan's envy, hatred, and malice, who, like Balak of old, would fain hire some wretched Balaam to curse them with a bitter curse. But let them take courage; they are journeying to a better inheritance than their Christ-despising neighbours ever knew, and every day brings them a stage nearer to that good land where the Lord will own them for his children, and bless and crown them with his salvation. Even now,

"These toils have almost reached a close,
And soon they're destined to repose
Within the promis'd land;
E'en now its rising hills are seen,
Enrich'd with everlasting green,
Where Israel soon shall stand."

OCTOBER 4.

"*We walk by faith, not by sight.*"—2 Cor. v. 7.

On this important subject, so necessary to our growth in grace and honouring of God, an old and pious writer has beautifully observed, "When we trust God upon his bare promise, we trust him on his own credit, and this is faith indeed. He that walks without crutches is stronger than he that needs these to lean on. The promise is the ground that faith goes on; sense and reason are the crutches which weak faith leans on too much in its acting. Now, soul, enquire, canst thou bear up thyself on the promise, though the crutch of sense and present feeling be not at hand? May be thou hast had some discoveries of God's love and beamings forth of his favour upon thee, and so long as the sun shone thus in at thy window, thy heart was lightsome, and thou thoughtest thou shouldst never distrust God more; but how findest thou thy heart now, since those sensible demonstrations are withdrawn, and, may be, some frowning providence sent in their room? Dost thou dispute the promise in thy thoughts, as not knowing whether thou mayest venture to cast anchor on it or no? Because thou hast lost the sense of his love, does the eye of faith fail thee also, that thou hast lost the sight of his mercy and truth in the promise? Surely the eye of faith is weak, or else it would read the promise without these spectacles. The little child, indeed, thinks the mother is quite lost if she goes out of the room; but as he grows older, so he grows wiser; and truly so will the believer. Christian, bless God for the experience and sensible taste thou hast at any time of his love; but know that we cannot judge of our faith, whether weak or strong, by them." *(Gurnall.)*

OCTOBER 5.

"*We walk by faith, not by sight.*"—2 Cor. v. 7.

THE pious old writer to whom we lately turned on this very important subject, has further observed, that "Experiences, or sensible comforts and demonstrations of God's love felt in the soul, are neither to be despised nor made too much of; they are useful, but not absolutely essential to salvation; they are cordials by the way, but not the foundation or warrant of a Christian's hope." The good man quaintly, but wisely observes, "Experiences are like crutches, which do indeed help a lame man to go, but they do not make the lame man sound or strong: food and physic must do that. And therefore, Christian, labour to lean more on the promise, and less on sensible expressions of God's love, whether it be in the present feeling or past experiences of it. I would not take you off from improving these, and limiting the actings of our faith. A strong man, though he does not lean on his staff all the way he goes, as the lame man does on his crutch, which bears his whole weight, yet he may make good use of it now and then to defend himself, when set upon by a thief or a dog in his way. Thus the strong Christian may make good use of his experiences in some temptations, though he does not lay the weight of his faith upon them, but upon the promise." (*Gurnall.*) Oh, those many great and precious promises! how fully, how suitably, how cheeringly are they placed before us, that we through patience and comfort of them might continually have hope! May the God of all grace daily establish our faith in them, amidst all the trials and confusions of a sinful, dangerous world!

OCTOBER 6.

" Happiness, thou lovely name!
Where's thy seat, O tell me where?
Learning, pleasure, wealth, and fame,
All cry out, 'It is not here:'
Not the wisdom of the wise,
Can inform me where it lies:
Not the grandeur of the great
Can that bliss I seek create."

No, we must go far beyond and far wide of these things in our search after happiness. Once she dwelt on earth for a short season, and paradise was her home: but sin entered that sweet spot, and happiness spread her wings, and flew to heaven; and never since then has she done more than occasionally to cast a passing smile on here and there a poor way-faring pilgrim on his road to Zion. Reader, art thou athirst for these refreshing, though but passing visits? Cast thy soul unreservedly on Christ Jesus in repentance and faith, and labour to give up thy whole heart to him, and then thou shalt have as much of happiness as is good for thee here below. In this way only must thou seek and expect it. And the largest and sweetest portions that will be found in thy earthly cup, will be when Jesus lifts up the light of his countenance upon thee, and whispers, " Be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee." O my Lord, be thou indeed the

" Object of my first desire,
Jesus crucified for me!
Here let all my hopes aspire,
All my hopes reposed on thee:
Thee to praise, and thee to know,
Constitutes our bliss below!
Thee to see, and thee to love,
Constitutes our bliss above."

OCTOBER 7.

" Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy."—John xvi. 20.

As a subject of general application this will afford a standard or evidence whereby to try the state of our own hearts. The Lord Jesus was about to leave the earth, and no longer in person to go about exhorting, rebuking, warning, threatening, and inviting sinners to flee from the wrath to come. And this would greatly rejoice a world that lay in wickedness, and desired to pursue its downward course unchecked and undisturbed. But this same event would greatly distress the disciples, who loved the Redeemer's presence, and felt their continual need of his instruction and protection in every step they took. Just so it is now. In every parish how rejoiced are the profane portion of the inhabitants, and the worldly-minded, and the self-righteous, when those ministers either die or leave the place, who were accustomed to show them their sins, rebuke their iniquities, and to warn them of their sure and everlasting destruction, unless they repented and turned to God in the faith and practice of the gospel. And so, when any of the children of God, or any of his professed followers, are overtaken in a fault, and stumble and fall, to the disgrace of their profession, how does the world rejoice and make merry at all this! But oh, how do the real servants and disciples of Jesus weep and lament in secret over their fallen brethren, and over the wounds thus inflicted on the cause of Christ! So, again, when many are brought out of the drudgery of sin into the glorious liberty of the children of God, this at once enrages the world and rejoices the christian bystander.

OCTOBER 8.

"*Here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come.*"
Heb. xiii. 14.

WHILE the vain, the gay, and the profligate, labour to forget this solemn truth, let us pray that the Lord of life and of death would ever keep us mindful of it. Nor ought we to rest satisfied until we have scriptural ground to believe that in our Father's house there is a mansion preparing for us; that the rich grace of God has "begotten us again unto a lively hope of possessing an inheritance, incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us." Why then should we shudder, or shrink back at the remembrance of our having no continuing city or abiding home, or lasting inheritance on earth? We have food and raiment, and we have a house, and a temporary shelter for our few passing days in the flesh; and this is enough. May it be the rejoicing of our souls, that our abiding city, our lasting home, our everlasting inheritance, is in heaven, and that there our Lord and Saviour is a resident, and will be so for ever, with his ransomed family. In all the mercies and comforts which the providence of God sends us day by day in our journey, it behoves us to be truly thankful: but our hearts and treasures must be above. When this world has supplied us with the necessaries of life, it can do no more of real good for us. Beyond our daily supply of these,

"What have we in this barren land?
Our Saviour is not here,
Nor will our souls be blest until
That Saviour doth appear."

OCTOBER 9.

"*Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life.*"—John vi. 67, 68.

MAY all the full import of Peter's words be deeply felt by us all; and may all the love, the reverence, and affection which Peter felt for his forsaken Master, be ever felt by us. It is communion with Christ that forms the very life of God in the soul of man, and nothing can compensate for the loss of this blessing.

"Lord, it is not life to live,
If thy presence thou deny:
Lord, if thou thy presence give,
'Tis no longer death to die:
Source and giver of repose,
Singly from thy smile it flows;
Peace and happiness are thine,
Mine they are, if thou art mine.

"While I see thy love to me,
Ev'ry object teems with joy;
Here, O may I walk with thee,
Then into thy presence die!
Let me but thyself possess,
Total sum of happiness!
Real bliss I then shall prove;
Heaven below, and heaven above."

But may I, indeed, expect such a privileged lot as this? I, who am a poor, sinful, worthless, unworthy creature? I who at my best estate am altogether vanity? Yes, the Lord himself has made me capable of all this blessedness, and he has raised my desires and longings after it; and he will perfect that which concerns me, and I shall glorify and enjoy him for ever, to the praise of the riches of his grace.

OCTOBER 10.

"*I go to prepare a place for you.*"—John xiv. 2.

It is this personal interest in what the Saviour has done, and is now doing—it is this individual and personal participation of the blessings of the covenant of salvation that comes home to the soul with a power and enjoyment that nothing else can equal; and to which all the forms and generalities of religion (be the creed ever so scriptural) can never compare. The forms and generalities of Christianity may serve to beguile unstable souls, and to lull to sleep the conscience of the vain, the worldly, and self-righteous, especially while youth, and health, and prosperity crown their board, and inconsideration and vanity tell them of many years to come. But when the world frowns and injures—when health and strength fail us—when time with us is drawing to a close, and we are brought near to the Jordan of death itself, then we shall find, that the forms and generalities, even of the gospel itself, will administer no real consolation. These are times when we shall need all the supports of an individual, personal appropriation of the promises, and of a steady, well-grounded confidence that Jesus Christ is really and truly preparing a place for us, and that where he is, we soon shall be also. Through all the trials and persecutions which the disciples were destined to pass, after their Lord had returned to his own kingdom, how would this assurance animate them! And so it will do now, and to the end of the world, wherever the heart believes unto righteousness, and faith enables the soul to hear the Lord saying to it individually, "Behold, I am *thy* salvation." Lord, bless us daily with more and more of this happy experience.

OCTOBER 11.

"*In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you.*"—John xiv. 2.

Every impostor that has come into the world, pretending to be some great one, has invariably laboured to beguile his followers with fanciful and lying descriptions of things which had no real existence; by promising enjoyments that were not to be found, and by leading men forward with hopes and expectations that eventually were doomed to sink in utter disappointment. Not so our blessed Lord. He often warned his followers of the crosses and trials, the hatred and persecutions they would have to encounter for his sake: but he also encouraged them by such promises of future good as eye had not seen, nor ear heard, nor had the thoughts thereof entered into the conceptions of the mind. Nothing, however, is stated at random; nothing is exaggerated; nothing is held up but real, absolute facts. Much concerning heaven is, indeed, set forth in metaphorical language, because the nature of the subject and our poor limited capacities admit of no other method; but so far from our expectations being at last disappointed, the sight and the enjoyment of our future portion will altogether exceed every hope, every idea, and every previous conception. If it were not so, the blessed Jesus would have told us. None need fear being excluded heaven for want of room: there are *many mansions*—that is, a fulness, an all-satisfying sufficiency for each and all of the unnumbered hosts who will ever constitute the general assembly and church of the first-born in heaven, whither Jesus their forerunner is already gone to prepare a place for each of them.

OCTOBER 12.

" He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry: when he shall hear it, he will answer thee."—Isaiah xxx. 19.

NOTHING is more common than for Satan to tempt the real Christian to doubt whether the Lord does really hear and regard his prayers. To the individual of a constitutionally low and depressed habit this enemy will represent, how completely, how inconceivably happy the Eternal Jehovah is in himself; how he is surrounded by the songs and perfect services of angels and archangels; of thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; of cherubim and seraphim, and of all the spirits of just men made perfect. And then, this enemy of souls will ask the drooping, trembling pilgrim, whether it be reasonable to think, that under such circumstances the divine ear will be open and his attention be given to man's daily and hourly supplications? At these moments the tempted supplicant is ready to cut short his petitions, to rise from his knees, and return to the strifes and contentions of the world, in despair of being heard and compassionated by him to whom he has been praying. But now, see how the matter really stands; not only will the Lord bow down a condescending ear to his poor child's prayer, and listen to his tale of sorrows, fears, and afflictions, but he will be kindly disposed to sympathize with him; nay, he will be *gracious*, yes, *very gracious* unto him at " the voice of his cry:" and more; when he shall hear it " he will answer him." He will make him know, that those who cast their burden upon the Lord, are really and effectually sustained; and although their sorrows may endure for a night; yet joy does come in the morning.

OCTOBER 13.

"*The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.*"—Psalm xlvi. 7.

WHEREVER this is the case, the individual is perfectly safe, and he may well be free from fear of evil. But who may take up this language—who may apply it to themselves individually? Every soul that has experienced the regenerating grace of God the Spirit, and is desirous of walking in the Saviour's steps in faith and loving obedience. To all such the word of salvation is sent with all its many and great promises; and with the view of furthering and completing their salvation individually and collectively are the dispensations of providence arranged by him who rules in heaven above, and over-rules in all kingdoms of this earth. "All things are theirs; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are theirs; because they are Christ's; and Christ is God's." Such is their high privilege! God himself is their reconciled God, their own God, and will be their portion for ever! Oh, how happily may that heart go to rest this evening in which the love of Christ is shed abroad by the Holy Ghost which is given it! and with what composure may it enter on all the necessary and unavoidable cares, the labours, and trials of the succeeding day! While such look forward to a great number of dangers and difficulties to be encountered, and remember that the powers of darkness, the snares of the world, and the remains of the old Adam within them will hourly beset their path, and labour to destroy their soul; yet may they take courage, and go forward with shouting, "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge."

OCTOBER 14.

"Ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."—John xvi. 22.

THIS is the joy unspeakable and full of glory, which constitutes the grand feature of heaven! It is that which all the leading stages of conviction of sin, repentance, pardon, sanctification, and adoption lead on to, and in which they conclude or rest for ever! Oh, what inconceivable joy must the redeemed soul experience, in seeing, and knowing, in loving, and being beloved by God! "This is the white stone which no man knoweth, saving he that received it. Surely this is the joy which a stranger doth not intermeddle with. All Christ's ways of mercy tend to, and end in this joy. He wept, suffered, sorrowed, that his children might rejoice; he sends his Spirit to be their comforter; he multiplies promises; he discovers their future happiness, that their joy may be full. He opens to them the fountain of living waters, that they may thirst no more, and that it may spring up in them to everlasting life. He chastens them, that he may give them rest. He makes it their duty to rejoice in him always, and again he commands them to rejoice. He never brings them into so low a condition, wherein he does not leave them more cause of joy than sorrow. And hath the Lord such a care of our comforts here! O, what will that joy be, where the soul, being perfectly prepared for joy, and joy prepared by Christ for the soul, it shall be our work, our business, eternally to rejoice! Yes, thou poor soul, who prayest for joy, complainest for want of joy, longest for joy; thou then shalt have full joy, as much as thou canst hold, and more than ever thou thoughtest on, or thy heart desired."—*(Baxter.)*

OCTOBER 15.

"Then said the Jews, Behold, how he loved him."—John xi. 36.

YES, Jesus did indeed love Lazarus; and so he did also love Martha and her sister, as well as Lazarus, (ver. 5,) and the same love has gone forward, and does now, and will continue to go forth to all who desire to love and serve God. Nay, these desires are the effect of his having first loved them. Oh that our poor hearts may advance in this heavenly disposition of love and gratitude every day! O my soul! "if bounty and compassion be an attractive of love, how immeasurably art thou bound to love him! All the mercies that have filled up my life, all the places that ever I abode in, all the societies and persons I have been conversant with, all my employments and relations, every condition I have been in, and every change I have passed through, all tell me that the fountain is overflowing goodness. Lord, in what a sum of love I am indebted to thee! and how does my debt continually increase!" Oh, how shall my heart make any suitable return? "O that I could feelingly say, 'I love thee even as I love my friend and myself!' Though I cannot say, as the Apostle did, 'Thou knowest that I love thee,' yet I can say, 'Lord, thou knowest that I would love thee!' I am angry with my heart that it doth not love thee; I chide it, yet it doth not mend; I reason with it, and would fain persuade it, yet I do not perceive it stir! Lord, do thou thyself stir up my soul, that I may keep myself more in the love of God; and let not either life, or death, or any thing, separate me from it; then shall I be kept in the fulness of love for ever, and nothing shall much embitter or abate my pleasure." *(Baxter.)*

OCTOBER 16.

"I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long."—Psalm xxxviii. 6.

Thus it was with the Psalmist, and thus, at times, it is with every child of God. Sometimes the cause seems visible why it is so, yet frequently we cannot see or understand why we are troubled, beyond the fact that our daily sins of thought, word, and deed will always furnish abundant reasons why the rod of correction should be laid on us. But O, my blessed and compassionate God! I know that mercy is that exercise in which thou wilt rest, and that vengeance is thy strange and unwelcome work. Look then on thy poor troubled children when they are bowed down; look upon them in thine infinite mercy; temper and moderate the flame while they are passing through it; and show us all wherefore thou contendest with us. Give us grace to repent of what we have done amiss; enable us to go forth for the future with hearts more devoted to thy service, with more watchfulness, more faith, more confidence, more love. And oh, grant that every sorrow, and pain, and trouble that now reaches the heart, and bows down the soul, may end in eternal joy in thy presence and kingdom. Then, undoubtedly, we shall clearly know why we were here afflicted, and see, with perfect distinctness, how there was a necessity for every stroke, and that we received just that portion, just that kind of chastisement which was most fitted for our peculiar circumstances, and that nothing else could or would have been so much to thy glory or to our everlasting good.

OCTOBER 17.

" Begone unbelief, my Saviour is near,
And for my relief will surely appear ;
By faith let me wrestle, and he will perform,
With Christ in the vessel I smile at the storm."

WELL might the prophet say, " Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is," for never did he leave or forsake one such character since the foundation of the world. It is indeed a truth, that our sorrows, and fears, our doubts, and trials, and sufferings, do frequently return, and again and again are we found watering our couch with our tears, or going forth with a sorrowful spirit, and a heart almost sunk within us. But this state of things may be accounted for in a general way; in that our faith is very weak and unstable, so that at every fresh cloud which crosses our sky, we are ready to give way to unbecoming fears, and to form in our agitated minds the picture of a storm coming to sweep us before its fury. We forget how many times we have been thus unnecessarily alarmed, and how often the Lord has proved himself better to us than all our fears; yea, how frequently he has made our real or imaginary causes of alarm to produce the most substantial good. We forget these things, I say, and almost as certainly as that a new trial presents itself, we increase it tenfold by our want of faith. Moreover, the Lord frequently sees what we behold not: he sees there is an absolute necessity to keep down our rising vanity, our pride, or worldly-mindedness, of drawing off the heart from its idols, of thus bringing the soul nearer to himself. Lord, ever deal thus with me, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

OCTOBER 18.

"*And God said unto Moses,* I AM THAT I AM: *and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel,* I AM *hath sent me unto you.*"—Exod. iii. 14.

By this title did the Lord Jehovah describe himself; and this denotes the self-existent, eternal, incomprehensible God. But, as the author and giver of every good and perfect gift, there is a sweet application of this glorious subject, which the good Bishop Beveridge has placed in the following order. "When the Lord speaks of himself with regard to his creatures, and especially his people, he says, *I am.* He does not say I am their light, their life, their guide, their tower, or their strength, but only, *I am.* He sets his hand, as it were, to a blank, that his people might write under it what they please that is for their good. As if he should say, Are they weak? *I am* strength. Are they sick? *I am* health. Are they in trouble? *I am* comfort. Are they poor? *I am* riches. Are they dying? *I am* life. Have they nothing? *I am* all things. *I am* justice and mercy. *I am* grace and goodness. *I am* glory, beauty, holiness, eminency, supremacy, perfection, all-sufficiency, eternity, Jehovah. *I am* whatever is suitable to their nature, or convenient for them in their several conditions. *I am* whatsoever is amiable in itself, or desirable to their souls; whatever is pure and holy, whatever is great and pleasant; whatever is good and needful to make them happy, that *I am.* So that, in short, God here represents himself unto us as one universal good, and leaves us to make the application to ourselves, according to our several wants, capacities, and desires—He saying only in general *I am.*" To whom be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen!

OCTOBER 19.

"*We all do fade as a leaf.*"—Isaiah lxiv. 6.

WHATEVER the mere artist and admirers of landscape scenery may declare as to their enraptured delights in surveying the varied tints and shades that our fading, our drooping and dying foliage are now putting on, yet there are few of these persons but feel a gloom and melancholy irresistibly come over their spirits as these objects speak home the solemn truth, "We all do fade as a leaf." It was intended by the Almighty that these things should speak, whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear; and unless the soul be rendered altogether callous by a long and desperate course of increased iniquity, it must, it does, it will feel enough to condemn it for ever, if the voice be stifled and studiously avoided. Whatever charms the poet and the sentimentalist may invest autumn with, and it certainly has its charms, it will, in defiance of all efforts to the contrary, bring sadness to the worldling and child of pleasure, to the slave of sin and the carnal man of every description, as often as these trifling and unhappy creatures do think at all. There is but one description of persons that can look on the fading, falling leaves of autumn with real composure, and hear with complacency of mind that voice, "We all do fade as a leaf;" and they are those who have a feeling sense, a scriptural hope of an interest in all which the Lord Jesus Christ has done and suffered for sinners, who believe that they are on the way to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them.

OCTOBER 20.

"*Wilt thou break a leaf driven to and fro?*"—Job xiii. 25.

HERE is an emblem of man, "a leaf," and of man in the day of affliction, when his heart is distressed; when the furious blasts of the terrible one are beating as a storm on his soul; when fightings within and fears without drive him hither and thither like the frail leaf which is become the sport of every wind that blows! Reader, hast thou known what this means? Or art thou now the "leaf driven to and fro?" If so, thou hast known what it is for the tempter to write bitter things against thee. Perhaps, at this very time, some fresh calamity has overtaken thee, and thou seemest like a leaf torn from its parent stem, and Satan tells thee that thou wilt perish for ever. Now, poor mourner, be assured of this; there are those among thine own ranks of sin-laden mortals that can and do feel for and sympathize with thee, and canst thou for a moment think that thy Father, who is a God of tender compassion, will stand by with less tenderness? Oh, no; he will not break a leaf driven to and fro! The leaves which an autumnal gale tears away from the trees and scatters to and fro to be seen no more for ever, do, indeed, hold up a faithful lesson, and exhibit a striking picture of the frailty and vanity of all earth-born good, and of all creature idols. But there is a Tree of Life, a True Vine into which thou hast been engrafted, and though thou mayest, as to thy perishing body and present existence, be as the leaf driven to and fro, yet thy soul shall live and flourish in eternal and ever-increasing beauty. It grows on Christ Jesus, and because he lives it shall live also.

OCTOBER 21.

"*Come, ye blessed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.*"
Matt. xxv. 34.

SUCH is the joyous sentence that is to wind up all the cares and trials, all the sorrows, dangers, and sufferings of the Lord's children, when he comes in the glory of his Father with all his holy angels. But these words will, in fact, be pronounced over the head of every pardoned and renewed believer the very instant his soul is absent from the body. Oh, that altogether lovely and gracious Redeemer!

"How will his kind endearing voice
Make my enraptur'd heart rejoice,
When I in glory hear him?
While I, before the heavenly gate,
For everlasting entrance wait,
And Jesus, on his throne of state,
Invites me to come near him!

"Come in thou blessed, sit by me,
With my own life I ransom'd thee—
Come taste my perfect favour!
Come in, thou happy spirit, come,
Thou now shalt dwell with me at home—
Ye blissful mansions make him room,
For he must stay for ever!"

Then will it, indeed, appear, that every cross, every contempt, every temporal loss encountered for his sake and the gospel's, are so abundantly recompensed, that instead of regretting that we suffered shame and persecution for his name and cause, we shall for ever esteem it the highest privilege thus to have been honoured. Holy and blessed God, lead me daily and hourly in the steps which my Lord and Saviour trod when he was on earth, and finally bring me where he now is, that, according to his all-prevailing prayer, I may share his glory.

OCTOBER 22.

"Why fear the path of grief to tread?
Why, Father, shrink from thy decree?
If thus my longing soul be led,
A safer, shorter way to thee."

Among that general assembly of spirits of just men made perfect, which surround the throne of the Eternal in heaven, there are very many martyrs and confessors of the Redeemer, who in the most trying times were faithful unto death, and who, rather than deny the Lord that bought them, went gladly to the most cruel tortures that wicked men could devise. To the flesh this was the path of grief, but it was a safe and short way to the possession of what their souls longed to inherit. And now, when none of these fiery trials cut short the pilgrim's journey at noon-day, there are others which answer the same loving purpose, but which, to flesh and carnal sense, are frightful to look at: a sudden and violent fever; a deadly infection; a blood-vessel breaking; a spasm on the heart; and a number of sudden visitations called accidents, these frequently lay the young and blooming frame on a death-bed, with little or no warning voice, with little or no lingering stages. Death is thus commissioned to make his visits when and where he is least expected; and his orders are to do his work speedily. Well, be it so. If the individuals he thus lays low are among those who worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and put no confidence in the flesh, the earlier or the speedier they are removed hence, so much the greater is their privilege; for however distressing such events may be to the survivors, they become the very circumstances by which

"The longing, waiting soul is led,
A safer, shorter way to heaven."

OCTOBER 23.

"They desire a better country, that is, an heavenly; therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city."—Heb. xi. 16.

It is this desire, implanted in the soul by the Holy Ghost, which distinguishes the people of God from the children of this world. But it must be remembered, that the Christian's desire for that better country is not so much from any wish to be freed from the trials and sorrows of this world, as it is to be free from sin, and to be made like unto Christ Jesus himself. There is not a poor, unhappy servant of the devil on earth who would not prefer heaven to hell when his time of departure is at hand; this feeling is the natural one of all mankind who wish to escape from pain and suffering. But where there is no other wish than this, the soul will never find itself among the spirits of just men made perfect above. Heaven is a world of purity and love, of perfect, unspotted holiness. It is a world where every disposition, and desire, and thought is a copy of what exists in the mind of the Lord Jesus; and on this account it is that the real Christian now longs after such a home. He is in part renewed after the image of God who made him, but still he is imperfect, and encompassed with many infirmities. All these, however, will be done away in heaven, and his soul will there be like unto the angels, and then and there it will be enabled to serve him for ever and ever. Oh happy, better country!

"This is the heaven I long to know,
For this with patience I would wait;
'Till wean'd from earth and all below,
I mount to the celestial seat.
What heights and depths of love divine,
Will then through endless ages shine!"

OCTOBER 24.

"For this God is our God for ever and ever: he will be our guide, even unto death."—Psalm xlviii. 14.

YES! the anxious, sin-smitten, trembling soul will reply, "the Psalmist and those about him, who feared the Lord, might say all this with truth. But who may now adopt these words as their own, and in the end find them realized in their safe and happy guidance, even unto death?" Poor, anxious enquirer, I will tell thee. He who is of a humble and contrite spirit: he who is looking to the cross of Christ; to the flowing blood of that atoning Lamb of God for redemption from all his sins, and who longs to follow Jesus in a heart-purifying faith, and in a loving course of obedience, even unto the end. This is the person who may take up these words and say, "This God is my God for ever and ever: he will be my guide, even unto death." Not that such individual will be a perfect character; no, but he will long to be such, and while he daily finds abundant cause to lament his sins, negligences, and ignorances, he will look to and implore more grace and strength from Jesus, the author and finisher of faith; and this doing, he will receive, out of his fulness, all grace for grace. Still he will be a sinner—an unworthy sinner—and still he will cleave to the cross, and look there, and there alone, for redemption from sin; and being found there, he may, with an eye of faith, behold Christ Jesus on his mercy-seat in heaven, and say, "This God is my God for ever and ever: he will be my guide, even unto death."

OCTOBER 25.

"*I will heal their backslidings; I will love them freely: for mine anger is turned away from him.*"—Hos. xiv. 4.

So long as men continue ignorant of the evil of sin, so long they consider that God will not punish it. They will talk long and loud concerning the mercies of God; but his justice, his truth, and holy abhorrence of sin, they overlook. On the other hand, when the Holy Spirit has convinced us of sin, then are all the arts of the tempter employed to persuade us that God can never forgive such vile and guilty creatures as we now behold ourselves to be. But the humble penitent will ever find a ready forgiveness. The Lord will heal his backslidings, and make him a new creature. He will bind up the broken heart, relieve it of its burden of guilt, and enable it to believe that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from, and atoneth for, all sin. He will love such characters freely, and their waiting souls shall know that he does, indeed, love them. Oh, that every sin-smitten child of Adam may avail himself of these precious promises. "To this man will I look," saith the Lord, "even to him who is of a contrite spirit." "I will fix my eyes upon him for good." "I will look upon him with complacency:" though burning seraphs surround my throne, and myriads of angels, brighter than the sun, encompass me around, I will look through all their shining ranks, nor shall all of them together divert my attention from the contrite sinner." "To this man will I look." "I will rejoice over him with joy." "I will rest in my love." "I will joy over him with singing."

OCTOBER 26.

"*My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken thou me according to thy word.*"—Psalm cxix. 25.

MANY wonderful and glorious things are spoken of the city of our God, and at times the Christian feels lifted up some little way in his desires and anticipations of that rest which remains to be revealed. Yet, alas, how soon do the cares or the vanities of this world, or the stratagems of Satan, or the remains of carnality within us, draw off the thoughts, and chill the affections that lately seemed to be advancing and gathering some warmth in the way for heaven. With sometimes even a deep conviction of the inestimable value of a place in that kingdom, we find the soul still cleaving to the dust, to things temporal, and to creature enjoyments, and creature expectations, in a way that is surprising even to ourselves. Lord, do thou arouse my soul from this unworthy frame. Have I not often groaned under the burden of my guilt and imperfections, under the load of this body of sin and death? And is there any reasonable hope, any well-grounded expectation of things ever becoming much better, so long as I am in this wilderness of sin? No, it will, day after day, at best, be only the spirit warring a little more successfully against the flesh; but that flesh will still retain strength and enmity sufficient to war against the spirit, and often to bring my better hopes and desires into captivity. Let me, then, O my gracious Lord, find a more complete deliverance from every thing of worldly-mindedness and carnality, and enable me to find, day by day, that my heart and conversation are more steadily and more fervently ascending to heaven.

OCTOBER 27.

"*The ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy on their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.*"—Isa. xxxv. 10.

This delightful chapter throughout describes the joyful and flourishing state of Christ's kingdom, and the happy and highly sanctified state of the church in its latter-day's glory; but the full import of much of its glowing language must be looked for beyond the limits of our earth. Happy indeed will our world be when Satan shall be chained, and all men shall experimentally know the Lord, from the least to the greatest; when no lion or ravenous beast, no evil seducers or persecutors shall be found within or without; and when the redeemed of the Lord shall walk before him in all loving, holy obedience, and every man shall love his neighbour as himself. Yet this will not be our heaven. There will remain imperfections and frailties, if not sins enough, to convince all living that they are yet mortal, and connected with the flesh. It must be in Zion which is above that the songs and everlasting joy shall be heard in full chorus, and where joy unspeakable and full of glory will for ever put to flight every shade and symptom of sorrow and sighing. It is in Zion above, in the city of the living God, in the heavenly Jerusalem, that the Lord has promised to lead his redeemed people to living fountains of water. It is there, and there only, that all tears will really be wiped away. But in proportion as the same Lord reveals himself to his waiting and praying people, they do, even now, obtain joy and gladness, such as a stranger intermeddleth not with. Lord, evermore impart this consolation to our souls, for Jesus Christ our Redeemer's sake.

OCTOBER 28.

" My God, how excellent thy grace!
Whence all our hope and comfort springs;
The sons of Adam in distress,
Fly to the shadow of thy wings."

WERE it not for this privilege, how dreary a wilderness would this earth prove to many, and to myself for one. Providence hath indulged me with many things which the greater portion of mankind do not enjoy; the lines are fallen to me in a fair place in comparison to thousands, and yet I am daily sensible of wants that earth cannot supply, of consolations that this world never did, or can impart. I feel desires which God alone can accomplish. I want happiness that is unmixed with cares, anxieties, and sorrows. I feel a longing for a treasure that is exposed to no diminution or decay. I want a felicity that is full and everlasting. I want a nature that is wise, and holy, and perfect; but whither shall I look for these things beneath the sun? They are not here. The world, properly so called, is a fugitive, passing, empty dream; and often it is a vile deceiver and injurious. Its very character is that of imperfection in quality, and evanescent in duration. And as to the hour of death, and the day of judgment at these seasons, it can do really nothing. It has no food for the soul; nothing that can stand by it when heart and flesh fail; nothing that can bind up a broken heart, or set the sin-smitten and sin-burdened spirit free. But the grace of the Lord our God can do all this. Oh blessed truth,

" From the provisions of his house
We may be fed with sweet repast;
There mercy, like a river, flows,
And brings salvation to our taste.'

OCTOBER 29.

"*Hope maketh not ashamed.*"—Rom. v. 5.

When the wicked man dieth, all his hopes perish, both with respect to his expectations in this life and in the world to come. And so does the hope of the hypocrite, and the hope of the double-minded and unstable man, and of the self-righteous, and of every description of the children of Adam who neglect or despise the hope set before them in the gospel. And oh, what an awful event is this! to die under a delusive, vain, and false hope! to find, when help and deliverance are most needed, that then they are without even the shadow of support or assistance! But how sure and firm is the hope of the gospel! How sufficient, how comfortable, how surpassing all that the soul dared to hope for. It leads to Christ Jesus in time, and it brings us to him in eternity. It rests on the sure and certain word of an unchangeable God, even on the Lord Jehovah, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. It gives up every expectation, and every desire of being found in its own righteousness; and it looks to and expects the promises of the gospel to be fulfilled in every time of need. Yes, the Lord continues to do as he hath promised. He imparts grace and strength according to the day, and he kindly rebukes all our unbelief, by shewing us that although our faith at times almost fails, yet that he remains faithful, and cannot deny himself. But it is in his children's greatest extremities that he appears most gloriously for them; especially in the hour of death and in the day of judgment; shewing them that he really exceeds all their hopes and expectations. Lord, may I ever find it so; and may I go on from strength to strength, until I appear with thee in Zion.

OCTOBER 30.

"Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave and follow thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou from hence my all shall be:
Perish ev'ry fond ambition,
All I've sought, or hop'd, or known;
Yet how rich is my condition,
God and heaven are still my own."

My christian reader, hast thou been called on to give up any flesh-pleasing idols, any favourite pursuits, or pleasures, for God and conscience sake? Hast thou seen the danger of any of these things, or forsaken the paths of worldly fame and ambition, and, like Moses of old times, preferred a lot among the humble and despised followers of the meek and lowly Jesus? if so, I am sure thou hast made a choice that will never be regretted by thee, even in this world, and never, never in that kingdom whither thou art going. But should no such circumstances have offered thee the choice, yet there are many other things in which thou canst set the example to others, and do good to thine own soul, by giving up for Christ's sake. For instance, old companions, who still reject and scoff at heavenly things; old frequented company, where Jesus is not welcome; books and studies which do not warm thy heart and lead thee to Christ; and, in short, all those opinions, customs, ways, and works which the world esteems, and which those in thine own rank and situation follow, but which Christ Jesus condemns. In giving up these thou wilt have enough to exercise thy faith and courage. May the Lord give thee the comfort of feeling and knowing that through grace he is thy portion, thy pearl of great price, thy hope in time, and thy whole trust for eternity.

OCTOBER 31.

" *How blest is the Christian, bereft*
Of all that could burden his mind!
How easy the soul that has left
This wearisome body behind!"

WHAT a change at once passes on such an individual! How great beyond every anticipation, every conjecture, every idea that the labouring mind and soaring fancy can now paint!

" The languishing head is at rest,
Its thinkings and aching are o'er;
The quiet, immoveable breast
Is heav'd by affliction no more;
The heart is no longer the seat
Of trouble and torturing pain;
It ceases to flutter and beat,
It never shall flutter again."

And does this change await me? Shall some friend stand, ere long, at my couch, and gaze on my breathless frame, and say,

" This earth is affected no more
With sickness, or shaken with pain,
The war in the members is o'er,
And never shall vex him again:
No anger, henceforward, nor shame,
Shall redden this innocent clay,
Extinct is the animal flame,
And passion is vanish'd away!"

Lord, if this be the conclusion of my earthly and bodily conflict, and my soul meanwhile is entered into thy joy, methinks I would have songs of praise sung over my bier, and not a tear let fall on my corpse. Oh, it is an unspeakable privilege, both to body and soul, thus to die, and thus to exchange labour for rest, sorrow for joy, sin for holiness, and earth for heaven. Lord, grant it may be thy servant's portion, for Jesus Christ's sake.

NOVEMBER 1.

"*Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*"—Eccles. i. 2.

THERE are few passages of Scripture less honoured than the above; and yet there are none which contain a more certain or a more profitable moral lesson. The man who seriously utters these words is in danger of being laughed to scorn, or considered an ill-tempered creature, who has not the power to enjoy himself. The unthinking and frivolous, the boisterous and ambitious, the profane and licentious, the avaricious and the vain, are, one and all, incapable, as well as disinclined, to give the subject one moment's serious consideration, and without proof, without argument, and without reason, they at once pronounce it "peevish and childish falsehood." But this is not all the slight put upon this portion of holy writ. Many of our sober, grave, and grey-headed moralists, our philosophers and men of science, and many of our statesmen, our judges, and doctors learned in the law, are very slow to learn, are very tardy in entering into the deep and solemn truth here brought before them. Nay, more; there perhaps is not a man living who fully realizes this truth, until he finds or supposes himself to be on the borders of an eternal world. It is then and there, if ever, that the preacher's declaration comes home with an overwhelming conviction, and all the pursuits of men, and all the objects that hitherto engaged their attention, are found and felt to be vanity of vanities, if they had not a direct or indirect connection with the prosperity of the soul, and with the making of their calling and election sure for eternity.

NOVEMBER 2.

"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall; but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint."

Isa. xl. 29–31.

Here we contemplate the Christian as a traveller, who, far from home, and in the midst of strangers, turns at length his steps thitherward, and sighs and longs to be there. As he thinks of the safety and support which that mansion affords to all beneath its roof, and contrasts these things with his dangers and privations, his heart burns within him, and he sets off, and runs forward in the way; but alas! he is soon exhausted, and his running is reduced to walking, and even this is, by and by, too much for him; he is faint, and sits him down, and weeps, and thinks of home. Anon he feels a little recruited, and proceeds forward, when a lion meets him in the way, and destroys him!

Lord, I am this traveller. I am far from thy house; I am passing through a strange land, and dangers and difficulties of every name and degree are about my path: how shall I hold on, and reach the haven of peace and safety where I would be? Can I, may I indulge a good hope that I shall hold out unto the end, and at length find, that where Christ Jesus is, there I am also? Yes, I know this is possible, and I will trust, and not be afraid; for thou givest power to the faint, and to them that have no might thou increasest strength; and although the earthly travellers should faint and be weary, and utterly fall in a distant land, I may hourly wait upon thee, and in doing so I shall be enabled to run and not be weary, to walk and not faint.

NOVEMBER 3.

"*Vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*"—Eccles. i. 2.

LET us suppose that this evening concludes our last day on earth, and that before to-morrow's sun rises on the world we shall have quitted it for ever. And with this unspeakably solemn event present to our minds, let us look back on all the chequered scenes and varied circumstances of our past days. Let us call to remembrance the hopes and fears, the gratifications and disappointments, the sorrows and the joys, that by turns agitated our bosoms, engaged our thoughts, and filled up our time. Let us call up the pains and the pleasures, the labours and the enjoyments we have passed through, and connect with these every other event that helped to fill up our years; and then let us suppose we have to bear witness against ourselves, that these were the things that shut us out from seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, oh, it is clear enough that then we shall most feelingly exclaim, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" Yes, this will surely be the case, although many of these things were lawful in themselves; but when allowed to retard our progress towards heaven, when permitted to occupy the first place in our thoughts, our affections, and desires, they not only appear as vanity in the prospect of the grave, but they are felt to be as the worm that never dies, and as the fire that is never quenched, by that soul who, for the sake of these things, has lost, for ever lost, the kingdom and glory of God. What then shall it profit a man, though he gain the whole world, if, in accomplishing such gain, he loses his own soul?

NOVEMBER 4.

" Be not weary in well doing; for in due season ye shall reap, if ye faint not."—Gal. vi. 9.

To be found " well doing," I must cordially believe the doctrines of the gospel, and sincerely endeavour to perform its duties in that very station, and in those very circumstances in which it hath pleased God to place me. In this path of duty many discouragements and difficulties will present themselves; but, in due time, my promise-making and promise-fulfilling Redeemer will give me to reap all he has promised. O, my heavenly Father, give me faith and patience; give me hope, and strength, and courage to act my part in the world agreeable to thy holy will and pleasure; fully believing, that the bread thus cast upon the waters will be found after many days. And, as to my own soul's concerns, let me go forward, though faint, yet pursuing; and in the exercise of faith and prayer, of watchfulness and activity, may I find that, even now, I do obtain more victory from time to time over the world, the flesh, and the devil. Oh! grant me grace to " fight manfully under the banner of Christ, and to continue his faithful soldier and servant unto my life's end." May I be faithful unto death, and then do thou give me the promised crown of everlasting life. Oh, glorious harvest! Oh, unutterable mercy! Then shall I never be faint, or weary, or be obstructed, or disheartened with difficulties any more; but joy unspeakable and full of glory will be my everlasting and ever-increasing portion with thee in thy kingdom.

NOVEMBER 5.

"*Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.*"—Rev. ii. 10.

LORD, I would fain be so; I make a profession of being thy servant. May I be faithful to this profession, to my convictions, to my vows, to the promises I have made in times of trouble; may I be faithful to the knowledge, the warnings, the calls, and the merciful strivings of the Holy Ghost which I have received, and am still receiving; may I be faithful in a willingness to take up every cross, and in following thee daily through evil report and good report, just as thy providence leads my path; may I be faithful in watching and keeping my heart with all diligence, and in endeavouring to have my conversation void of offence before thee and before men; and faithful, also, in renouncing my own righteousness, and in cleaving to Christ for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. This, O Lord, is what I desire to do and to be. Oh, keep me, and uphold, and guide, and strengthen my soul with thy grace daily and hourly, that I may hold on and hold out even unto the end. And then, O that crown of life which thou hast promised! But what tongue can tell, what heart conceive the blessings comprised in that promise! Oh, may I ever walk before thee as one whose heart and treasures are in heaven; and so long as I am in this poor barren land, this land of shadows, of follies, and sins, may I hold communion with thee in prayer and meditation until the hour of my departure comes; and

> "Then, Saviour, then my soul receive,
> Transported from this vale to live,
> And reign with thee above;
> Where faith is sweetly lost in sight,
> And hope, in full supreme delight,
> And everlasting love."

NOVEMBER 6.

"*Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace.*"—Psalm xxxvii. 37.

In scriptural language the perfect man and the perfect heart mean a sincere character, a heart truly single in its desires and endeavours, both to believe and to act *in all things* agreeable to the will of God. Defective in all things, as such a heart still feels itself to be, in every duty, and in every devotional feeling and affection of the soul; yet it presses onward, desirous of loving the Lord more, and of serving him better for the time to come. As to its intercourse with the world, it really strives and desires to do unto others as it would they should do to it. There is no hypocrisy, no double-dealing, no concealment, no duplicity in such a man's conduct; he is what he appears to be. Such a person is, in fact, led by the Spirit, and walks in the Spirit, and brings forth those fruits of the Spirit which prove him to be a child of God. His faith is of the right sort; it purifies the heart, works by love, and overcomes the world; and he has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, their end is peace, that is, they die to live and reign with Christ for ever. In general their last days are days of sweet composure, of calm and steady confidence, and sometimes of positive triumph; but this is not always the case, neither does this promise mean so. But it means, that however diversified by sorrows, sufferings, infirmities, and assaults of the enemy, their last days may be, yet the end is and will be peace; will be gracious and glorious; the jubilee of the soul, and last for ever.

NOVEMBER 7.

" Blessed are the people that know the joyful sound."
Psalm lxxxix. 15.

The joyful sound here spoken of is that of the gospel of Christ Jesus, which brings pardon of sin, sanctification of heart, peace with God, and charity towards all mankind; this is the thing which the Psalmist means, and to know this is to be blessed indeed. But, remember, it is the *experimental* knowledge of this grace which is here meant. It is in the experience of these fruits of the Spirit in our own souls, and not the mere knowledge of the doctrines in our understandings, which constitute the blessing. Those who experience the pardoning, sanctifying, and peace-giving effects of the gospel within themselves, and who endeavour to maintain a conscience void of offence, both towards God and towards man, do walk much in the light of the divine countenance; and they are enabled to rejoice in his name, in his love, in his past mercies, in his present consolations, and in his promises for the future. In themselves they neither find or feel any thing to commend, or to build one hope, one fond expectation on; but they are humbly confident that in the righteousness and merits of the Lord Jesus Christ they shall be for ever exalted; that he will be their glory and their strength; and while passing through innumerable dangers he will be their defence by the way; that as the Holy One of Israel, he will be their king. O, thou God of all grace, enable me to drink deeper of these living waters. Give me to know more and more of thee, whom truly and experimentally to know is life eternal.

NOVEMBER 8.

"Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."—Rev. xxi. 3.

DURING the brief and happy state of man's innocency, he was privileged with, now and then, a visit from his Maker. These, however, were transient blessings, and not often repeated. And even when they did take place, there must have been a veil either altogether cast over the divine majesty, or very much eclipsing his glory, otherwise Adam, sinless as he was, could not have looked upon him and lived. But in heaven it is far otherwise; there the tabernacle of God is with men, that is, the more immediate and manifested residence of the eternal Jehovah is where his redeemed children are, and their more immediate and actual residence is where his is found. And there they behold his uncreated glory; and while this uncreated splendour admits not of angel or man to penetrate or look within the veil, still the visible glory of Christ Jesus, as the only begotten Son of God, shines forth, and is seen and heard in the Lamb who sitteth upon the throne. And around that throne are gathered the redeemed of all nations, and of all kindreds, and people, and tongues. On these, *individually*, the Lord Jesus smiles in love, and on him does every eye look; to his voice does every ear listen, and out of his fulness does every happy spirit receive grace for grace. And what makes up the very ultimatum of heaven's felicity is, that every redeemed sinner is sure that that glorious and visible Son of God loves him, and will love and delight in him for ever. Every son and daughter of Adam found there, knows and feels that Christ is their own God, and that they are his endeared, his blood-bought, and beloved children.

NOVEMBER 9.

"*Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.*"—Psalm xcvii. 11.

The Lord himself hath declared, "that many are the afflictions of the righteous," and the blessed Jesus assured those around him, even his nearest and dearest followers, that in this world they would have tribulation; yea, at the very moment he addressed them, he said, "Ye now have trouble." Nor is there a doubt but that, sometimes merely through the infirmities of the body and of the mind acting on each other, many a child of God walks in much and long darkness. But, on the other hand, there are no few among those of whom we hope well in general, who walk in much gloom, and are seldom able to "read their title clear to mansions in the sky."—Now, in all these cases, it behoves the individuals to examine their hearts closely; for, with very many of them, there are evident reasons why they do not enjoy more of the light of God's countenance in their souls. The real fact is, they are not sincerely and wholly given up to God. They are living in the practice of some sins or inconsistencies which their conscience condemns, but which they hesitate to give up. In this state of things there can be no peace. Take then this warning,

> "Shake from thy soul, o'erwhelmed, depress'd,
> The incumbering load that galls its rest,
> That wastes her strength with bondage vain,
> With courage break the enslaving chain!"

This must be done, and the soul must cleave to the Lord with full purpose of heart. "Ye cannot serve Christ and Belial." The fruits of righteousness are peace, and this peace is enjoyed by the upright in heart only.

NOVEMBER 10.

"They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, and they shall walk and not faint."—Isa. xl. 31.

Oh, what preciousness and beauty does this portion of God's word contain! As the morning, and the noon, and the evening, succeed each other, so regularly and so certainly do they find me destitute of all strength and power of my own to urge on my course to heaven, to subdue any of the remaining corruptions that still lodge in my heart, or to encounter those many and great enemies which Satan and an evil world are hourly sending against me. But here is my privilege, my encouragement, my safety; I may at all times, and under all circumstances, wait upon the Lord in prayer and supplication with thanksgiving; and so long as I continue to do this, I shall certainly receive out of his fulness all grace for grace. I shall find my drooping spirits revived, my failing strength renewed, my soul animated, my hope confirmed, and my love and faith increased. The hill of difficulty may intercept my path, its sides may be very steep and rugged, and its summit may be lost in the clouds; but none of these things are any cause of alarm to him whose help is in the Lord. The eagle surmounts every hill, and soars away far above the mountain, and above the cloud that enshrouds its head, and then it beholds and rejoices in the bright, the unclouded light of the sun, as it fixes its eyes upon it, and mounts nearer and nearer to this fountain of light and heat. And so it will be with my soul, when God, even my God, shall renew my strength, and fulfil his promises in my behalf.

NOVEMBER 11.

"He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom."

Isa. xl. 11.

O THOU good and ever gracious Shepherd, can I doubt thy readiness to be with me and to supply all my wants? No, for thou art the Good Shepherd. Thou, who didst not spare thyself when a sacrificial lamb was required to be offered up; thou, who when the search was made through all the dominions of the boundless empire of Jehovah for an atonement for mankind, didst come forth alone, and when none could be found either willing or of sufficient merit to bear away sin, didst present thyself before all the hosts of heaven, and, resplendent in thine own eternal glory, didst thus address thy Father; "Lo, here I am; I delight to do thy will, O God!" thou, who didst indeed perform all that will, by obeying and suffering, the just for the unjust; can I, after all this, doubt whether thou wilt regard me when I cry? Can I doubt whether thou wilt now withhold any good thing from me? No, but like a good shepherd, thou wilt watch over me by night and by day. Thou wilt lead me to suitable pastures, and thou wilt defend me from the enemy that is too strong for me. What I may yet be exposed to I know not; but one thing thou hast promised, namely, "That thou wilt never leave nor forsake me." Be it so, O Lord.

> "When faint and trembling with alarms,
> O gather us within thine arms;
> Kind Shepherd, on thy gracious breast,
> The weakest Lamb may safely rest."

And thus fed, and gathered, and carried by thee, I shall be safe and happy for time and eternity.

NOVEMBER 12.

"*We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.*"—1 John iii. 14.

MANY a timid Christian is afraid to take that comfort to his own soul which his state of experience and the gospel of Christ authorize him to do. Because he feels sin still warring against the spirit, and because he cannot love Christ equal to his desires, he is afraid to say, "my spirit wars against the flesh"—"my soul desires and loves the Lord its Redeemer;" and yet this is really the case. Well, my poor fellow-traveller to a heavenly country, dost thou love the brethren? Are those whom thou believest to be lovers and followers of Jesus, the people of thy preference and choice? Are these thy chosen companions? Is it the society and conversation of such that thy soul loveth? If so, here is one good evidence that thou hast passed from death unto life. Thy faith, and hope, and joy, and peace may at times be so shaken, so disturbed, so obscured, as to afford, in thy estimation, little or no evidence that the Lord is thine, or that thou art his. But at these seasons thou mayest still see and feel the evidence of thine interest in Christ, by that love which thou art sure does exist in thy bosom toward his people. Oh, sweet evidence!

"The friends of Jesus, join'd to think
With one desire and aim,
A chain, wherein link answers link,
A heavenly kindred claim.
And oh! how sweet, wherein each mind
A throb to echo theirs we find."

Lord, grant me the enjoyments of this communion of saints on earth, and all the comforts of this evidence of my being one of thy children, until I enter into communion and societyship with them above.

NOVEMBER 13.

" *Our earthly ties are weak,*
Whereon we dare not rest:
For time dissolves, and death will break
The sweetest and the best.
Yet there's a tie which must remain,
Which time and death assault in vain.

" *The kindred links of life are bright,*
Yet not so bright as those
In which Christ's favour'd friends unite,
And each on each repose;
Where all the hearts in union cling
With him, the centre and the spring."

NOTHING is more true than this; and it is this sweet peculiarity of christian feeling, of christian friendship, and of christian affection that constitutes much of that hidden life with which a stranger intermeddleth not, and concerning which the world has no knowledge. But what is still of much higher importance, it is this very tie, this chain of christian love that will ever bind and unite their souls in an everlasting bond of friendship in heaven; it is the commencement of such a union as becomes the family of Christ, and as is ordained to be one of those sources from which every individual, and all the collective hosts of the Lord's children, will derive fresh and everlasting enjoyments. The carnal heart talks and thinks of the society of heaven as acting and feeling much or entirely according to the instincts, the feelings, and affections of mortality; but this is utterly untrue. The kingdom of heaven is a kingdom of love; but

" Their bond is not an earthly love,
By nature's fondness nurs'd:
As they love him who reigns above,
Because he loved them first;
So they all minor ties disown,
The sweetest—for his sake alone."

NOVEMBER 14.

" *Neither shall there be any more pain.*"—Rev. xxi. 4.

LORD, it is good to return frequently to the contemplation of that rest which remains for thy children, and I would bless and praise thee for the many great and precious things thou hast spoken concerning it, and that among others thou hast declared, " there shall never be any more pain." As in the dispensations of thine unerring and good providence thou seest fit that we should now be frequently tried and exercised with pain in the flesh and in the mind, I would beseech thee to give me all the graces of patience, of resignation, and submission to thy will; and at what time soever this poor languishing head seeks rest and finds none, by reason of the pain that still oppresses it, may I have a sweet and refreshing sense of my future home, where all suffering will vanish for ever. To lie down in pain, at night, and through the night to shift from one position to another, and still unable to escape the pain; to count the slowly succeeding hours, even unto the dawning of the day, and yet to find little or no relief; and to pass through the day with an enfeebled and a suffering, sinking frame, all this thou knowest is too much for poor frail mortality to endure quietly and comfortably, without thy presence and promised consolation. O, grant me much of that presence, much of these consolations in every trying season. And amidst all thy various mercies and blessings, may all my pains of body be greatly and graciously over-ruled, so as to quicken my steps towards and increase my desires after thy painless, sinless, deathless, happy kingdom. Never, O Lord, never permit the enemy to bring my mind so to complain, as to question or to repine at the course thou seest good to take with me.

NOVEMBER 15.

"For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."—Isaiah lvii. 15.

THE *Lord Jehovah* here testifies by the mouth of his holy prophet, that he has two especial dwelling-places. One is the "high and holy place," that is, the heaven of heavens, where he manifests his glory, and reveals himself as fully as angels and glorified spirits can sustain the display! It is there, on the throne of his glory, that he sways the sceptre of universal empire, and glorifies the riches of his grace and providence in upholding, guiding, and blessing his church and people. It is there, "in the high and holy place," that cherubim and seraphim, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers ever look on him with increasing wonder and holy awe; with ever-increasing adoration, rapture, and love! It is there, that while they surround his throne, they "veil their faces, and cease not exclaiming, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty! who wast, and who art, and who art to come!" But there is a second wonder which will for ever excite the astonishment of the highest created intelligences above! This glorious inhabitant of the heaven of heavens has another dwelling-place. Not content to dwell exclusively in the high and holy place, he dwells also "with him who is of a contrite and humble spirit," and consecrates many a heart a living temple of the Holy Ghost! Lord, I know not where to wonder most, whether at thy unspeakable exaltation "in the high and holy place," or at thy deep condescension and unbounded love as dwelling in the heart of the humble and contrite sinner!

NOVEMBER 16.

" Oppress'd with fear, oppress'd with grief,
To God I breath'd my cry:
His mercy brought divine relief,
And wip'd my tearful eye.

" His mercy chas'd the shades of death,
And snatch'd me from the grave:
O may his praise employ that breath
Which mercy deigns to save."

READER, hast thou known what it is to be called, as it were, to look into thy grave? Hast thou been brought to its borders, and have circumstances made it very probable that thy days were almost numbered? And did these solemn dispensations overtake thee at a time when thou hadst no good, no safe, no comfortable hope to lean upon? Oh, then I can tell thee, but thou knowest it already, that thy soul was in as gloomy and storm-laden a state as the skies which these cold November days bring over the world. May it be thy happy lot at this time to bless God for sparing thy life, and for giving thee a new heart and a right spirit; a good hope, which shall ward off, in future, all oppression of fear and grief, in the prospect of exchanging this world for another. To stand on the verge of time, and to be about to take one step more, and then to find ourselves in eternity—this is a moment, this is an event that nothing can render joyous and safe; but knowing in whom we have believed, and being assured by the witness of the Spirit that Christ Jesus will go with us, and fulfil all his precious promises of pardoning our sins, sanctifying our hearts, and glorifying our souls for ever; may I and you find it so, and God shall have all the praise in time, and through all eternity.

NOVEMBER 17.

"He giveth power to the faint, and to those that have no might he increaseth strength."—Isa. xl. 29.

WHAT can be more suitable or precious than such a promise as this! Here the Lord's seeking and praying people are brought forward, not in the character of strong, of courageous, and mighty creatures, naturally invested with powers and resolution to do mighty things; but they are addressed as the "*faint*," and as those "*who have no might*." This may, indeed, offend the proud, self-exalted sinner, but it will greatly comfort the humble and afflicted saint. These know and deeply feel that at no time have they any inherent spiritual courage or might of their own wherewith to resist the adversary. They know more; very often they are faint, so faint, so drooping, so nearly gone, that vain is the help of man, and utterly hopeless is their case, unless the mighty God of Jacob comes to their aid. Well, here that aid is promised; and it is the privilege of the sinking, fainting spirit to stretch out the hand of faith, to throw the arm of trust and confidence, as it were, around Omnipotence, and to find and feel that the Lord upholds and comforts it. O, my gracious God and Saviour, may I ever be enabled to put my trust in thee. And then, although I am surrounded by all the powers of darkness, and am utter helplessness in myself, I shall come off more than conqueror, and thou shalt have all the glory. O Lord, be not angry, and I will speak but this once, When the time of my departure arrives, and death itself is full in view, do thou enable me to know that *my* Redeemer liveth, and to feel assured, that although "heart and flesh fail, he is and will be the strengh of my soul and my portion for ever."

NOVEMBER 18.

" Our hearts are fastened to this world
By strong and endless ties,
And every sorrow cuts a string,
And urges us to rise.

" When heaven would kindly set us free,
And earth's enchantments end,
It takes the most effectual means,
And robs us of a friend."

Nor is it one of these visitations only that we are exercised with; as concerns many of us, " friend after friend departs." We look to the right hand and to the left, and behold the places where they once dwelt, and where we often took sweet counsel together; but the beloved friends are seen no more. On a thousand occasions the mind will run back, and the thoughts will fasten on times, and places, and conversations which, although now far away, never fail deeply to interest, and sometimes deeply to afflict the heart: and can any good come to us from these painful recollections of " things that were and are not?" Yes, at such times the soul feels that it needs a better, a far more satisfying portion than any thing which this restless, changing, dying world holds out; and it reads, it hears, and thinks with deeper, with much more fervent desires than it once did, of that unchanging, happy, holy, and everlasting rest which remains for the people of God. Man learns in this school such profitable, though painful, lessons as he never knew before; and, having a good hope of the safe arrival of those whose absence he now laments, he wipes off the starting tear, in hope of shortly meeting them to part no more for ever.

NOVEMBER 19.

"We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us."—2 Cor. iv. 7.

This rich treasure is nothing less than the eternal Jehovah shining upon our hearts, and giving us the light of the knowledge of his own glory in the face of Jesus Christ. It is, in fact, the salvation of the gospel—the saving grace of God. And oh, how great a treasure is this! It is a treasure of knowledge in exchange for our ignorance. It is a heart of flesh in lieu of a heart of stone. It is a treasure of warning, of caution, of encouragement, of comfort, of faith, of hope, of joy and peace in the Holy Ghost. It is the obtaining of peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, on earth; and it leads to the full and everlasting enjoyment of the presence and kingdom of God in heaven. Now, in thus enriching poor guilty sinners, the Lord makes use of, and renders effectual, the instrumentality of earthen vessels, of poor feeble, frail, and worthless men, to the intent that all the world may understand how salvation is of grace; that it is the Lord's excellency of power; and that, of course, to him belongs all the glory. O, my blessed God, continue to send this inestimable treasure into the hearts of all mankind, until all the ends of the earth are partakers of thy precious salvation. Send, O Lord, send forth a numerous host of earthen vessels, filled by thyself with such riches of every description as thou wilt own and apply to men's hearts. And grant that I, thy poor servant, and all who are near and dear to me, may receive out of thy fulness daily more and more of these heavenly riches, until we come into thy presence, where there is fulness of joy, and to thy right-hand, where there are treasures for evermore.

NOVEMBER 20.

"*We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed: we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.*"—2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.

HERE, then, we see that first-rate Christians are not exempt from troubles, yea, that they have troubles on every side; that they are brought into great perplexities, have to encounter real persecutions, and are sometimes cast down. Such is the infinitely wise and good will, such the pleasure of him in whose hands are all hearts, and under whose controul are all events, past, present, and to come. Why, or for what particular reason he often permits these things, we cannot understand; but he knows it altogether; and for our peace and consolation under them, he has assured us that none of them shall come without his merciful and gracious support coming with them; so that we shall not be troubled with an overwhelming anxiety of mind, nor be driven to despair of his wisdom, his power, his goodness, or his grace, much less shall we be forsaken or destroyed. No, but these very distresses and perplexities shall bring us nearer to his throne of grace, and be the sanctified means of crucifying the world to us, and us unto the world; of setting our hearts more loose from earth and from all things below, and of raising our affections and desires nearer and nearer to heaven. Lord, grant that such may be the happy result of all our trials by the way; and through whatever scenes or conflicts we may yet be called to pass, do thou enable us to realize thy presence, and to enjoy a sense of thy love. Ever let us hear a voice behind us, saying, "What I do, thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter."

NOVEMBER 21.

"*Thou God seest me.*"—Genesis xvi. 13.

WHILE the constant nearness of God is a most refreshing thought to the soul that wishes to love and serve him in the gospel of his blessed Son, it is a sad and startling consideration to the man of the world. But let every sinner remember, that this God is present at the commission of all his crimes. "When thoughts of rebellion, profaneness, ingratitude, arise in the soul; when thoughts of pride, envy, malice, deceit, injustice, and cruelty deform; and when those of intemperance, levity, and lewdness debase the heart, then is God in the polluted mind, searching its secret chambers, and laying open all the hiding places of iniquity. When the sinner trifles with God in his house of prayer, by contemptuous and unbelieving thoughts concerning his word, or murmurs in his heart against the providences and dispensations of the Almighty; when he labours to deceive himself with arguments formed to justify sin and flatter the conscience into security; when he ensnares, pollutes, and destroys others as well as himself, by carrying his evil designs into guilty and dreadful execution; then, however he may imagine himself concealed by the shades of solitude, or the curtains of midnight, from the view of every observer, one eye is still entirely bent and fixed upon him. God is present, sees, hears, and takes account of all his thoughts, words, and actions. Yes, even then the eye of the Lord, as a flame of fire, lights up a clear and searching day in his soul, and around his steps, and shews, as in open day, all the iniquities which he devises, utters, or perpetrates." *(Dwight.)* Oh that this truly solemn subject may ever produce a holy walk and conversation in us all.

NOVEMBER 22.

"*Thou God seest me.*"—Genesis xvi. 13.

It has been already observed, that while this subject is awfully astounding to the determined sinner, and truly solemn to all mankind, it is full of sweet consolation to the soul that longs to be what the Lord would have it. "Yes, truly, every such individual may remember that his Creator and Redeemer is equally present with him, and fully acquainted with all his ways. Notwithstanding all his real or supposed insignificancy, his fears and doubts, he is not forgotten of his God here, nor in that day when the Lord makes up his jewels. The tears which he has shed, the prayers which he has offered up, the two mites he has consecrated to God, and the cup of cold water which he has given in the name of a disciple, are neither unnoticed or unregarded. God was present on each occasion, saw the act, the motive, and knew the feelings which led and prompted to them, and he will acknowledge them as having been well-pleasing in his sight. From the constant, kind, and merciful regards of his Maker, no situation or circumstance will conceal him for a moment. However lowly, solitary, forgotten, or disregarded by mankind, his course through life may be, yet all his interests, his want, his woes, are tenderly, as well as constantly regarded by God."—*(Dwight.)* Blessed Lord, ever let me rejoice in the thought that "*Thou seest me*," and, that I may do so, keep my heart and mind stayed on thee in all simplicity and in all godly sincerity. Come down, O Holy Spirit, and dwell in my heart; consecrate me as a living temple for thy residence, and then, having communion with the Father and with the Son, through thee I must and shall be happy.

NOVEMBER 23.

"*Thou God seest me.*"—Genesis xvi. 13.

AGAIN, my christian reader, let us turn our meditations to this soul-refreshing subject. Yes, "In times of sorrow, sickness, bereavement, or desertion, when the believer has lost his parents, children, partner, friend, or companion; when the world begins to seem to him like a desert, and life to be a burden, even then, his God is at hand as his Father and everlasting friend; and he will be better to him than sons and daughters, than all parents, or partners, or friends, can be. He will be present as the physician of the body and the soul, administering help to the frame, if good for it, and pouring in the balm of consolation into the wounded spirit, so that the mourner shall say, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou so disquieted within me." When those around him are all become hostile to his religion; when he himself is hated, despised, and persecuted; when he looks through the world for help, and looks in vain, and is ready to sink in despair, even then, let him remember that God has been present, has beheld his sufferings, and will extend to him all necessary relief. Let him remember, also, that although they may seem heavy, they are but for a moment, and will, through grace, work for him "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." In seasons of temptation and trial, when his resolutions to resist, his fortitude to endure, his patience to suffer, and his wisdom to devise means of escape, fail and decline, God will be present to supply all his wants, to renew his vigour, to support his yielding constancy, to deliver him from the unequal conflict, and to bless him with returning hope, and peace, and safety."—*(Dwight.)*

NOVEMBER 24.

"*Thou God seest me.*"—Gen. xvi. 13.

SWEET and solemn subject, equally necessary and equally precious for my warning and my encouragement. "When self-confidence, self-flattery, and self-righteousness inflate, deform, and betray me; when no christian friend is near to know, to pity, or to rescue me, God, even then, the Lord, is present to humble me, to guide, and to restore me. Does any humble, praying soul 'mourn in Zion' the hidings of the divine countenance, his own backslidings, or the depressions and sufferings of his fellow-christians, and feels as if both himself and the church were deserted and forgotten? Let him remember, that although his heavenly Father hath smitten him for his sins, yet his covenant he will not take from him, nor suffer his mercy to fail. Let him remember, that Jehovah will soon lift up upon him and his fellow saints the light of his countenance. He will appoint unto them all beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Is he come to a dying bed? Is eternity, with all its amazing scenes, beginning to be unveiled? Is the final trial ready to commence? Is his account even now to be given in, his sentence pronounced, and his endless allotment to be fixed? Behold, on the throne of judgment is that glorious person, who has promised that he will never leave or forsake him. The Judge by whom he is to be tried is his friend and Redeemer; and that divine Redeemer will now remember him as one of those for whom he made intercession continually before the throne of the majesty in heaven." *(Dwight.)* And then shall every such ransomed child of Adam take his station before the throne, and in the immediate presence of that God who will ever see and smile on him in love.

NOVEMBER 25.

"*For the Lord will not cast off for ever. But though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion according to the multitude of his mercies.*"—Lam. iii. 31, 32.

THERE is no parent so happy as never to have occasion to rebuke his children; no child so perfectly behaved as never to require correction. Sometimes the former is obliged to employ the rod, and on other occasions to hide his face in displeasure, and for a season to forbid the offender coming into his presence. It may also be, that on certain occasions the delinquent fears he is cast off or disinherited. But so long as the parent retains a parent's feelings, the child is near and dear to his heart, and after the discipline inflicted has produced the desired effects, the child will learn that every stroke was directed in wisdom and love. So it is with us, and with our Father who is in heaven. Our waywardness requires a frown; our rebellions call for the rod; our backslidings and ingratitude lead to the hidings of his countenance; and then we, the poor offenders, learn that sin is a bitter and grief-laden thing. Oh Lord, how great is thy goodness thus to deal with us. Never did a poor prodigal return in penitence to his Father's house and find mercy, but he fervently blessed the hand that corrected his backslidings, as well as the heart that again loved him freely. Indeed, he blesses every providence, every rod, and every affliction that brings him back from his wanderings, or that draws him nearer to the Lord. Blessed Jesus, thou knowest the way that my poor foolish heart but too frequently takes in its turning aside from thy commands, and I bless thee for having made me feel the smart of thy timely and gracious corrections, and for having had compassion according to the multitude of thy mercies.

NOVEMBER 26.

"*My flesh and my heart faileth, but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever.*"—Psalm lxxiii. 26.

If we live to pass the central arch in the bridge of life, every stage in our further journey will leave on us some symptoms of decay or failing of the earthly tabernacle. Many who never proceed thus far are, in the very prime of life, or flower of youth, smitten with lingering and incurable diseases; and every day shows them that "heart and flesh faileth," and all the circumstances of the case proclaim, that shortly they must depart hence to be no more seen; that in a little while they must go to the house appointed for all living, and that soon every earthly memorial concerning them will perish. O, what a distressing theme is this to the child of vanity, and to the servant of sin! And oh, how invaluable! how enviable is now a good hope through grace! Blessed God! it is the privilege of thy children not to fear death; yea, it is their privilege to rejoice in hope of that glory which lies beyond the grave, to look on the heart and flesh failing as tokens of the undying spirit being about to ascend into thy smiling presence, and to enjoy thy love as its everlasting portion! O, that I may enjoy much of this hope, much of this assurance; that so, while the body sinks and weakens, the soul may feel increased strength and vigour, and be enabled to sing,

"Jerusalem! my happy home,
Name ever dear to me:
Soon shall my labours have an end
In joy, and peace, and thee!"

This will, indeed, be to find, that thou art the strength of my heart; and this will also be an earnest of thy being my portion for ever. Glory be to thee, O God, Most High, through Jesus Christ!

NOVEMBER 27.

" Light of those whose dreary dwelling
Borders on the shades of death:
Come, and by thy love revealing,
Dissipate the clouds beneath.

" Come, and manifest the favour
God hath for our ransom'd race!
Come, thou dear exalted Saviour,
Come, and bring thy gospel grace."

Ah, November, thou art, indeed, an unlovely month. I will not say thou art unnecessary, or injurious, but thy whole character is that of sadness. Thy rains and wind, storms and darkening vapours surround our dwellings, or beat upon our heads; and these hold up a picture of what is but too frequently the sad and gloomy state of the soul. Reader, art thou acquainted with these things? Has it at seasons been November with thine heart? Has the Sun of Righteousness been shrouded from thy view, as the sun of our system is hidden by the heavy clouds that float over us? Has the comforter that should refresh, and warm, and invigorate thy soul been away, and thou left, like a November traveller, to proceed in the mire and dark of a stormy night? If so, thou wilt know better than others how to value the light of thy Redeemer's countenance, and to prize the manifestations of his love, when he again and again shines forth, and enlightens thy moral sky. Meanwhile, should it continue a mental November with thee for some weeks to come, thou wilt do well to recollect the brighter seasons of a spiritual spring and summer, which ere now have gladdened thine heart, and to watch, and wait, and pray for a return of these spirit-refreshing times again; and thou wilt then sing with joy and gladness, to the praise of thy Redeemer's grace and love.

NOVEMBER 28.

"I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day."—2 Tim. i. 12.

The Apostle was now suffering the disgrace and severities of chains and imprisonment for the sake of Christ and his gospel; but none of these things moved him. As to what his enemies might yet do to him, he neither understood nor feared; for he well knew who that Lord and Saviour was, into whose care and keeping he had entrusted his soul and body, with all his present trials, and all those future sufferings that might yet be to come. The Apostle knew that his Lord and Saviour had promised to give all grace in every time of need, to be with him unto the end, and never to leave or forsake him. And as to the sorrows and sufferings that might yet be permitted to reach him, these he knew would be sanctified to draw off his mind and thoughts more completely from things seen and temporal, and to fix them more intensely on things unseen and eternal. And thus should every one of us labour to feel and to act. Jesus Christ is the very same to each and to all of his praying and seeking people now, as he was to the Apostle Paul. And all this tens of thousands have found and felt to their present and everlasting joy. Lord, let it be found so by thy servant. All my wants and weaknesses, all my sins and infirmities, all my sorrows, sicknesses, and trials, both present and to come, are in thy sight, within thy reach, within thy removal. O my gracious God! let them all be so arranged as that my soul may be benefited, thy grace glorified, Christ Jesus honoured, and mankind instructed, and thy name shall have all the glory and all the praise.

NOVEMBER 29.

"*The Lord is my defence, and my God is the rock of my refuge.*"—Psalm xciv. 22.

None but the omniscient and omnipresent God can truly know the number and magnitude of all the dangers, difficulties, and snares that the soul has to encounter between its birth and its final salvation and happy arrival in heaven. Every Christian learns enough of these things to cause him frequently to groan within him; but, after all, we discover but a very small part of them, and of these we have but a very partial knowledge. God graciously hides them from us, and works out our deliverance on a thousand, thousand occasions, while we are alike ignorant of the one and the other. O what a tale will the records of heaven unfold by and by! There the redeemed sinner shall have access to the volume of his own history, "wherein all his members were written," wherein all his former perils, seen and unseen, are recorded, and where all the way by which the Lord led him is distinctly marked out. O wonderful record! Every page will display the unceasing care, the ever-watchful providence, the unwearied forbearance, the unmerited and superabounding grace of God the Father, of God the Son, and of God the Holy Ghost. Oh, ye enemies of my soul, while the Lord is my defence ye cannot harm me! while the God of Jacob is my refuge I shall be safe from all your malice and from all your power. O let me ever abide under the shadow of thy wings, my adorable Saviour! With thy peace and love shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost, let me lie down to-night and take my rest, and while thou art so mercifully sustaining me on earth, may my whole soul be ripening for thy service in heaven.

NOVEMBER 30.

"How happy are they who no more
Have to fear the assaults of the foe!
Arrived on the heavenly shore,
They have left all their conflicts below;
They are far from all danger and fear,
While remembrance enhances their joys,
As the storm, when escap'd, will endear
The retreat that the haven supplies."

However painful the assaults of our spiritual adversaries may be while they last, and however trying to the flesh many of those afflictions are that now fall to our lot, there can be no doubt but they are really made productive of good to our souls. They certainly endear the kingdom of God to the heart as it is struggling through its conflicts below; and when reviewed in heaven, and contrasted with the joys of that happy world, they must endear and increase those unspeakable delights.

The storm-driven mariner has something of a faint experience of this joy arising from a contrast and remembrance of past dangers and present safety, when, after having been on the very brink of perishing at sea, he is enabled to weather the dreadful cape, and to run into a harbour of shelter, safety, and peace. This I have myself experienced more than once. But then there was always this drawback to our gladness; we knew that the wide-spreading ocean was again to be traversed, and the enemy was again to be sought out, and all those dangers to be again encountered which were connected with the battle and the storm. But it is not so in the kingdom of our Lord above.

"Oh that hope! how bright! how glorious!
'Tis his people's blest reward:
In the Saviour's strength victorious,
They at once behold their Lord;
In his kingdom they shall rest,
In his love be fully blest."

DECEMBER 1.

"The man whose faith and hope are strong,
And free from vexing cares his mind,
As changing seasons pass along,
Can in them all fresh pleasure find."

WINTER, with this month, is really come to our door; "dreary winter," as it is often called, and as it always proves to thousands of mankind. It brings to multitudes a succession of trials, both in their bodily health and worldly circumstances, such as cannot but be felt. But whatever may be the state of these things, the present season is strikingly representative of that wintry time of man's life, when sixty or seventy years bring upon poor human nature their withering, wasting effects, and strip the children of men bare of another and another of their earlier enjoyments. Yet neither this winter in the natural world, nor that which comes over man in the character of old age, are without their blessings or enjoyments. Man's animal spirits have then, indeed, lost much of the flow and vivacity of youthful days; nor do his limbs retain their former activity, or his frame its earlier strength; but with faith and hope in exercise, and with some portion of quiet and cheerful spirits, which every one should labour to obtain and increase, the servant of Christ may pass his wintry season in the enjoyment of many cheering mercies, and sweet anticipations of that kingdom whither he is going, and near to which he is now come. Thus,

"Grateful for every blessing past,
And patient under present ill:
On whatsoever ground he's placed
Hope shall each future prospect fill."

Come then, storms, and chill the earth, and come then, winter, and enfeeble this frame. Only let it be spring time and summer in my soul, and I ask no more.

DECEMBER 2.

"*After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands.*"—Rev. vii. 9.

On reading the contents of this chapter, we are greatly in danger of forming erroneous notions of the real state and character of these happy, glorified saints. We are apt to think, that they were altogether a different race of beings to ourselves when they were on earth. Seeing how happy, how holy, how blessed, and joyous they now are, we, perhaps, think they were quite strangers to our sorrows and sufferings; quite unacquainted with such doubts, such fears, and inward conflicts as assail and distress us. Now all this is quite a mistake, for, as to all the things that cause us grief,

"These, alas! full well they knew,
Sad companions of their way;
Oft on them the tempest blew,
Through the long and cheerless day!
Oft their vileness they deplored,
Wills perverse, and hearts untrue,
Grieved they could not love their Lord,
Love him as they wished to do.

"Oft the big unbidden tear,
Stealing down the furrow'd cheek,
Told, in eloquence sincere,
Tales of woe they could not speak:
But these days of weeping o'er,
Past this scene of toil and pain,
They shall feel distress no more,
Never, never weep again."

And as the grace of God in Christ Jesus pardoned, sanctified, and saved them, who were once like unto ourselves, so the same grace can do the like for us, and make us what they are.

DECEMBER 3.

" *For me, O Lord! whatever lot*
The hours commissioned bring;
If all my withering blessings die,
Or fairer clusters spring;
Oh! grant that still with grateful heart
My years resign'd may run;
'Tis thine to give, or to resume:
And may thy will be done."

How rapidly have passed away eleven of the months of the present year, and how soon will this have finished its short course, and completed all its destined purposes in the arrangements of heaven. What lies beyond it, is not for me to inquire. My business is not with another year, or another month, but with the day as it passes over my head. Lord, while I am spared, it is my duty to pray for, and it is my privilege to desire, and to enjoy more and more of the divine presence in my soul; to feel a sweet resignation under every present trial, and a heavenly composure, as to all future events. It is my duty and privilege to enjoy all the mercies and means of grace now afforded me, and to stand ready to resign all—ready to leave all, and to feel one grand desire absorbing every other in the soul, namely, to depart and be with Christ for ever. O, my blessed God, grant that

" I may, 'till death, be firm possess'd
Of faith's supporting rod:
Then breathe my soul into her rest,
The bosom of her God."

And then, O what a change! From a wintry scene on earth, to an unfading, an eternal summer in heaven! From the use of means to the enjoyment of the Author of all grace himself! From the company of men, laden as myself, with like passions and infirmities, to the society of angels, and of spirits of just men made perfect!

DECEMBER 4.

"As some lone captive on a foreign shore,
Sighs to behold his native land once more,
Counts the dull hours before he break his chain,
And greet his lov'd, his long lost home again;
So, bound and fetter'd to her cell of clay,
Th' impatient spirit longs to burst away;
Scorns the vain world for nobler realms above,
And burns to dwell in everlasting love."

Such ought to, and such would be the abiding feelings of our souls, were our affections set on things above, as we are directed to set them. To the mere man of the world this subject is altogether strange, and to his perverted taste it is perfectly nauseous. But to a person possessed of some correct and spiritual views of heaven, there must be a longing and a desiring after "that better land;" and the lamentations of such are, that they do not more fervently press towards this mark of their high calling in Christ Jesus. In the most favoured station on earth, we find so little to exalt and satisfy the soul, and so much to debase and distress it, that we are sadly inconsistent in not striving more, in not agonizing after the possession of those great things promised to us, and reserved in heaven for all such as love the Lord's appearing; because,

"In those blest regions of eternal day,
No painful thorns obstruct the heav'nly way,
No earthly vapours dim th' expanding sight
From the pure blaze of uncreated light.
No grief is there, no tears of sorrow flow.
No bitter memory of a world of woe,
No ills, no wrongs, immortal joys molest,
The wicked harm not, and the weary rest."

Lord Jesus, never suffer my soul to rest until it awakes up with thee, and like thee, in thy kingdom.

DECEMBER 5.

"My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"—Psalm xlii. 2.

SUCH was David's earnest desire to visit the temple, to seek the Lord there, and to enjoy again the blessings which he had in times past enjoyed. Yet these could not fully satisfy his soul. He looked, as we read continually, beyond these outward and earthly courts, to that temple of God, not made with hands, eternal in the heavens; and every single drop of living waters which his soul partook of in the use of earthly means of grace, only increased his thirst after the fountain of the river of life in heaven. It was there alone that he could find the whole desires of his heart answered, "When I awake," says he, in another place, "when I awake up in thy likeness I shall be satisfied with it." Sweet and precious does the real Christian now find the Sabbaths and services of the Lord's house to be; yet these cannot always be attended on, nor are they always alike precious to our souls; and, indeed, when we have enjoyed them to the full extent of our expectations, they have soon passed away, and the fire which seemed to be kindled under the means, is, alas, but too often smothered by the succeeding cares, anxieties, and temptations of the week. These things must and will induce the real child of God feelingly to exclaim,

"Oh! might I bid a last adieu to earth,
And fly exulting to ethereal birth;
Burst the weak bars that hold me prisoner here,
And view the glories of the heavenly sphere:
Then wrapt in visions of celestial joy,
Where endless praises every tongue employ,
My ransom'd soul, absorb'd in sacred bliss,
Might see the great Redemer as he is."

DECEMBER 6.

"*My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and are spent without hope. O remember that my life is wind: mine eye shall no more see good. The eye of him that hath seen me shall see me no more: thine eyes are upon me, and I am not. As the cloud is consumed and vanisheth away: so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more. He shall return no more to his house, neither shall his place know him any more.*"—Job vii. 6—10.

THE state of poor Job's mind, under his long and peculiar trials, was often most gloomy, often much beclouded, sometimes much irritated, and sometimes almost in despair. Now and then a ray of hope would light up his spirits, and then we find him calm and submissive; and then, again, he is assailed by all the permitted fury of the oppressor, and all the future looks to him as only full of gloominess, and all the present is felt to be wretchedness itself. Such appears to have been the case when he gave utterance to the above pathetic complaints. And who can wonder at this? The faith and hope of this good man were greatly darkened, and what then can a sufferer feel but distress bordering on despair? Man's hastening mortality and corruption, his approaching death, and his speedy and everlasting departure from this land of the living, are subjects that can only be contemplated with composure in the light of the gospel. Oh, happy and blessed hope, why need the child of God regret that his days pass swiftly away? Why regret that soon he shall depart and leave all the busy, vain, contentions and strife-embittered pursuits of men on earth, for that joy which is unspeakable and full of glory in heaven? If ease be preferable to pain, and holiness to sin, and perfection to a thousand infirmities, then it is good to depart hence and be no more seen.

DECEMBER 7.

"*O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me.*"—Isa. xxxviii. 14.

Is this thy case my christian reader? Has a burden fallen on thine heart which seems too heavy to bear? And hast thou the testimony of thine own conscience, that thou hast not brought down this weight on thy head by any known, any allowed, any deliberate course of sinning? Then I am authorized to say, "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." "Wait upon the Lord, and be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart." "The Lord will not cast off for ever; but though he cause grief, yet will he have compassion, according to the multitude of his mercies." Should thy soul be tempted to think that help cannot, or will not come to *thee*, beware of such suggestions, they proceed from the wicked one, from the father of lies, and not from a God of righteousness and truth. The language of scripture concerning such as thyself, is, "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of all." "They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distress." And as surely as that he is a prayer-hearing and a prayer answering God, so surely thou shalt be helped and delivered. But should there be room to fear that thine own inconsistent conduct has brought this darkness into thy soul, then thou must unite unreserved confession of all thy sins, with fervent supplication for grace to abhor and renounce them for ever for the time to come. Having done this, thou mayest then say, "Lord, undertake for my comfort—undertake for my relief, for my forgiveness, for my sanctification and redemption, for thy beloved Son's sake." This doing, thou shalt yet praise him with a joyful heart, and he will have all the glory.

DECEMBER 8.

"*I will say unto God, Do not condemn me, show me wherefore thou contendest with me.*"—Job x. 2.

This will ever be a wise and proper course to take. At whatsoever time the Lord may be pleased to bring us into tribulation or affliction, we may be assured that he has infinitely wise and just reasons for so doing; nay, that in the case of all those souls whom he loves, there is frequent necessity for contending with every individual. He chastises, that he may not condemn. He corrects and rebukes, that he may not lose his child. Oh, how frequently does he behold something in us that needs pruning away! something deficient that needs implanting! Shall I then say unto God, "Do not contend with me?" No, but I will pray, "Do not condemn me; do not reject me; do not cast me away in thine anger, although I so richly deserve it; but show me wherefore thou visitest me; show me the lurking sins that grieve thy Spirit and defile my own soul; show me what I have not myself discovered, teach me what I know not, and make me to run in the way of all thy commandments with ever increasing delight;" thus would I pray. And oh, that from under every rod, and every visitation, I may come forth instructed, established, comforted, and made more fit, O Lord, for thy service, even as Job was by and in the end of all his afflictions. Then shall I know and feel that these afflictions, so called, were rich mercies in disguise; that they were the tokens of a Father's love, the purchased blessings of a Redeemer's sacrifice, and the very means in the hands of the Spirit of carrying on and completing a work of grace in my heart while on earth, and thus of fitting it for an inheritance in the kingdom of heaven.

DECEMBER 9.

"*Often the clouds of deepest woe*
So sweet a message bear,
Dark though they seem, 'twere hard to find
A frown of anger there.

"*Yes, often has adversity*
A richer boon bestow'd,
Has oft bequeath'd a purer joy
Than all that men call good."

THAT afflictions sanctified are among our chief mercies, no one will doubt who has the smallest knowledge of the will and word of God on one hand, and of the workings and tendencies of his own heart on the other. When health is strong and buoyant, how apt are we to lose sight of the sure and certain fact, that a day of sickness and of death are speeding their way to our door? When our cup is filled with prosperity, and our path is beset with the flowers of ease and earthly enjoyments, how much are we in danger of being lifted up with high-mindedness, and of forgetting that sorrow and distress are the lot of the great majority of all mankind. It is under these circumstances, so pleasing to the body, so in unison with every feeling of the flesh, that truth compels us to declare,

"Our spirits are most closely bound
To earth's delusive toys;
Poor baubles we are loth to leave
For everlasting joys."

Indeed, were it not for the "loving corrections" of our heavenly Father, we should as certainly fall back one step after another, and perish everlastingly, as that the soul naturally cleaves to the dust. Hence, the Lord mercifully takes us in hand, for

"It needs our hearts be wean'd from earth,
It needs that we be driven,
By loss of every earthly stay,
To seek our joys in heaven."

DECEMBER 10.

"*Then Jonah prayed unto the Lord his God out of the fish's belly, and said, I cried by reason of mine affliction unto the Lord, and he heard me; out of the belly of hell cried I, and thou heardest my voice. For thou hast cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.*"

Jonah ii. 1—3.

And why did the Lord do all this to his servant Jonah? In loving correction, in tender mercy to his soul. Jonah had fled from his post; he had turned away from his appointed duty; he had foolishly imagined that his views of what was best and most proper to be done, were more correct than those of his omniscient God. Now, in such a state of things, Jonah must either be given up to follow the vain devices of his own heart, and consequently to perish in following his own way, or he must be reclaimed by the merciful corrections of heaven. The Lord had thought of good concerning him, and therefore it was that the poor erring and disobedient prophet was made, for a season, "to cry by reason of his affliction." Oh, merciful affliction! Oh, kind waves, and seas, and floods, thus to compass about the wandering son of Amitai! And thrice happy and blessed afflictions, that are sent in mercy to bring us nearer to God! No matter how sharply the rod may fall, it will never equal our deserts.

"And what is sorrow, what is pain,
To that internal care,
That breaks the conscious heart for sin,
When sin is hated there?

"Kind, loving is the hand that strikes,
However keen the smart,
If sorrow's discipline can chase
One evil from the heart."

DECEMBER 11.

" *I'm going to leave all my sadness,*
I'm going to change earth for heaven;
There, there all is peace, all is gladness;
There pureness and glory are given;
Come quickly then, Jesus! Amen."

To be enabled thus to meet our closing hour on earth, is most desirable. In the case of all truly penitent and believing souls, the blessing of eternal salvation is equally certain, although not perceived and felt by all with the same assurance of hope. We may all pray that faith may be thus strong in exercise with us, and that we may have a bright view, a sweet foretaste of that peace and glory which await us; but we must not set it down as a thing of course, that the Lord will really grant the full experience of our request, nor must we for a moment suppose that the want of this full assurance, of this gigantic faith, is any evidence against the safety of our condition. He who is a Sovereign Lord, and has a just right to dispense his unmerited blessings when and in what proportion he sees good, is pleased not only to call his redeemed and adopted children out of this world by a variety of bodily circumstances, but also through a variety of different experiences as to the light and comfort, the faith and hope of the soul. Reader! dost thou love Jesus? Dost thou long to be *like* him, as much as thou longest to be *with* him? If so, then, although thy faith and hope may be far below a full assurance, thou art safe for ever. Although thou art not now so happy as thou wouldest be were thy faith stronger and thy hope more full of immortality, yet thou art safe, and shalt meet thy Lord in his kingdom.

DECEMBER 12.

" Had I a firm and lasting faith,
To credit all the promise saith,
Cheerful I'd meet the midnight gloom,
And the pale regions of the tomb.
Though tempests drove me from the shore,
And floods descended with a roar;
Though death appear'd in every form,
My little bark should ride the storm."

We greatly wrong our own souls, and as greatly dishonour the faithfulness of our Redeemer's word and promise, by our want of faith. Oh, what a second paradise would the simple belief of all God's word produce! To take up the gospel of our ever-blessed God and Saviour, and really and truly to believe all we read therein, this would change the whole aspect of external things, and set up a kingdom of righteousness, and joy, and peace in the Holy Ghost within us. Blessed Jesus! well mightest thou ask thy alarmed disciples, "why they were afraid, and wherefore they doubted?" and so thou mightest every day and hour put us to the blush with the same inquiry. They could make no reply in justification of their fears and doubts: nor can we, as thy professing servants, return any answer. There is not one circumstance that can possibly befall me, but thou hast brought it under thy notice, and in thy word hast made suitable provisions and promises concerning it. On these promises I am invited, nay, commanded, to lay hold, with an assurance that although heaven and earth may pass away, yet not one of these words shall fail. Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief; and under every trying event, every dark providence, may I trust and not be afraid.

DECEMBER 13.

" While over life's wide darkling plain
Unheeding as we roam,
Through many a path of joy and pain,
God leads his children home.
And though sometimes in prospect viewed,
The winding way seems dark and rude;
Ah! who the backward scene hath scann'd,
But blessed his Father's guiding hand."

To look back and see all the way by which the Lord our God hath brought us, to scan and trace the guidance of his providence, and to learn all the workings of the riches of his grace, through all the events and changes of our earthly pilgrimage, and fully to understand and comprehend all his purposes of mercy and love towards us, both before and after we desired to be found in Christ Jesus; this, all this, will be the delightful and everlasting exercise of the soul in the kingdom of heaven. At present, a thousand infirmities and impediments lie in our way, in thus reviewing the Lord's dealings towards us. We see as through a glass, darkly, and know but in part. Yet even that little part, so indistinctly seen, and so little understood, is enough to fill the heart with gladness and the lips with praise. And so it ever must be; because the Lord doth all things well. Henceforth, then, O my gracious Redeemer, do thou enable me to lie passive in thy hands! let me be found seeking to do thy blessed will through the hours of the day, as each day passes over my head. And O! thou Searcher of all hearts,

" Is there a thing beneath the sun,
That strives with thee my heart to share?
Ah! tear it thence, and reign alone,
The Lord of every motion there!
Thus shall my heart from earth be free,
When it hath found repose in thee."

DECEMBER 14.

" Pilgrim, burthen'd with thy sin,
Come the way to Zion's gate;
There, till mercy speaks within,
Knock, and weep, and watch, and wait:
Knock—he knows the sinner's cry;
Weep—he loves the mourner's tears;
Watch—for saving grace is nigh;
Wait—till heavenly grace appears."

To feel the burden of sin, and then to go in faith and hope with our load to Jesus for deliverance and peace, will never be our soul-saving experience, if the great enemy of all righteousness can prevent it. First, he will endeavour to keep us unmindful of and unbelieving in the sinfulness of sin, and next he will labour to implant despair of mercy in our bosoms. Reader! art thou groaning under the discovery and weight of thy sins. Art thou looking hither and thither for consolation, and still art thou sinking in despondency? Oh, turn unto Jesus, the stronghold and refuge open for every prisoner of hope. In defiance of all that the adversary can suggest, do thou determine to believe in those many and great promises given by a gracious and faithful God, on purpose that, through patience and comfort of them, thou, on all occasions, mightest have hope. Oh, do but persevere in knocking, weeping, watching, and waiting, and, by and by, thy sorrows shall be turned into joy, and all the days of thy mourning shall be ended.

" Hark, it is thy Saviour's voice!
'Welcome pilgrim to thy rest!'
Now within the gate rejoice,
Safe, and own'd, and bought, and blest.
Safe—from all the lures of vice;
Own'd—by joys the contrite know;
Bought by love—and life the price;
Blest—the mighty debt to owe!"

DECEMBER 15.

"*It is a good thing for the heart to be established with grace.*" Heb. xiii. 9.

"*The Lord is faithful, who shall establish you, and keep you from evil.*"—2 Thess. iii. 3.

How many professors of religion are strangers to this establishment in grace at this day! Ever learning, and never coming to a profitable knowledge of the truth; ever running hither and thither, and almost every month carried away by divers and strange doctrines. Vainly puffed up with a fleshly mind, and ever anxious for change and for something new, they mix up the politics and revolutionary spirit of the world with the profession of the gospel, and seem determined to serve Christ and Belial in harmonious conjunction. Oh! happy is that humble Christian whose steps are ordered by the Lord; who desires and prays for grace to be kept from these evils of the times; who prays and longs to be more and more established in all the mind and spirit of Christ Jesus, and to be rooted and grounded in the faith, the fear, and love of God. Such a soul will be preserved from the snares of the enemy, and enabled to hold on his way in safety and true wisdom among all the sophistries, and flesh-pleasing doctrines, and revolutionary contentions of agitators and politico-religious leaders. He shall be "like a rock of the sea, which is beaten with the tide, and washed with retiring waters, and encompassed with mists, and appears in several figures, but it always dips its foot in the same bottom, and remains the same in calms and storms, and survives the revolution of ten thousand tides, and there shall dwell till time and tides be no more." Thus shall it be with the man whom the Lord guides by his counsel and establishes with his grace.

DECEMBER 16.

"*Thus saith the Lord God; I will even rend it with a stormy wind in my fury.*"—Ezekiel xiii. 13.

When the eye of the traveller, at this season, gazes on the stormy darkness gathering and thickening fast around him, and looks forward to a long night of exposure to its gloom and fury, it may be that his thoughts run back to those evenings of summer when he has stood, and looked, and wondered, and looked again and again with admiration on the glories of a setting sun and a tranquil sky. At such recollections the man will feel the contrast in a way he could not otherwise experience. And should it be his unhappy lot to sink and expire under the fury of the night, far from refuge and far from help, how will such recollections embitter his last thoughts! But there is a stormy wind of a more dreadful nature, that will rend in its fury many a wayfaring man in his journey through life: and as that storm gathers, and beats him down where no shelter is to be found, how will his soul be agonized, if he has to remember that there were once sweet summer seasons of spiritual blessings shining all around him, and "that he once tasted of the heavenly gift," and once beheld something of the glories of the world to come, but that he fell away, and by his conduct tempted Satan to tempt him, and that now he is without hope! Most merciful God! grant that whatever darkness covers the earth, the light of thy countenance may shine on my soul; that whatever storms and wintry tempests may rage without, I may be blessed with thy peace within me, for Jesus Christ my Redeemer's sake.

DECEMBER 17.

"O Lord, thou hast searched me and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, thou understandest my thoughts afar off. Thou compassest my path and my lying down, and art acquainted with all my ways. For there is not a word in my tongue, but lo, O Lord, thou knowest it altogether. Thou hast beset me behind and before, and laid thine hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me: it is high, I cannot attain unto it. Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, Surely the darkness shall cover me; even the night shall be light about me. Yea, the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee."

Psalm cxxxix. 1—12.

"WHAT a majestic, what an awful, what a glorious manifestation of God is furnished us by this passage of Scripture! We are here taught that God is essentially present in all places, and to all beings; that he is equally present in this world, and in the heavens; that he dwells alike throughout the universe of being, and the uninhabited regions of immensity. That he comprehends, at the same moment of time, every thing possible and actual; that eternity, past and future, is perfectly present to his eye, and that no distance of place or duration can be any thing to him; that no retreat can conceal, and no darkness cover any being or event from his sight. That the mind of man is equally open to his view with the body; the thoughts and affections, as much so as the words and actions; that hell is as equally naked and present to him as heaven; and that the destroyer and the seraph are alike without a covering."—*(Dwight.)*

DECEMBER 18.

"*Am I a God at hand, saith the Lord, and not a God afar off? Can any hide himself in secret places, that I should not see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth, saith the Lord?*"—Jer. xxiii. 23, 24.

YES, "In heaven, the brightest and best of all worlds, the Lord is indispensably present. There he has instituted a perfect scheme of dispensations, which is the consummation and the crown of all his works. There every inhabitant receives, and loves, and keeps his own place, duties, and enjoyments; and consecrates, with all his heart, without weariness, and without end, his exalted faculties and immortal life, to the sublime purposes of glorifying his Maker, and advancing the universal good. To this end, God there lives in every being in a manner wholly peculiar. Hence 'the river,' which 'proceeds from the throne,' is styled 'the water of life;' and 'the trees' which grow on its banks, 'bearing twelve manner of fruits,' are named 'trees of life.' The body he animates with vigour, youth, and beauty, which cannot decay: the mind he informs with a divine and supernatural quickening, which empowers it to advance without intermission, and with incomprehensible celerity, in knowledge, virtue, and enjoyment. In that world God unfolds himself in infinite diversities of beauty, glory, and majesty, and enables his creatures to see eye to eye, and to behold his face in righteousness. Particularly, he manifests the transcendent wonders of forgiving, redeeming, and sanctifying love, and the desirableness of restoring, through the Redeemer, apostate sinners to the character and privileges of the children of God."—*(Dwight.)* Glory be to God most High. Amen.

DECEMBER 19.

"*The general assembly, and church of the first born, which are written in heaven.*"—Heb. xii. 23.

TURN, once more, O my soul, thy meditations to thy future home, and thy destined and everlasting companions. Let the eye of faith behold that endless, deathless, blessed family, adorned with no small portion of the beauty and glory of their Maker. "From the pre-eminent dignity of the archangel, through the glowing zeal of the seraph, and the milder wisdom of the cherub; through the high endowments of Moses, Isaiah, and Paul, down to the humble but virtuous inhabitant of a cottage, one spirit lives, and breathes, and actuates in all, and that spirit is divine. Each wears and exhibits in his own manner, and that manner a delightful and useful one, the image and beauty of Jehovah. All, though of different magnitudes, diffuse a real light; all are stars, though 'one star differeth from another star in glory.' All are the subjects of virtuous affections; all are fitted to admire and adore, to glorify and enjoy, their Creator; all are formed and disposed voluntarily to fill up their existence with doing good, with promoting individual enjoyment, and increasing universal happiness: all are bound together as children of one God, and brethren of each other, by 'love, the bond of perfection.' Every one, therefore, is lovely in the sight of his Maker."—*(Dwight.)* And these are the happy creatures with whom I hope one day to converse; and, through the all-sufficient merits and rich atoning blood of the Lamb of God, to dwell and worship for ever.

DECEMBER 20.

"*The hope of the righteous shall be gladness: but the expectation of the wicked shall perish.*"—Prov. x. 28.

The wretched infidel endeavours to persuade himself that hereafter he shall neither see good or evil. In his rage and blasphemy he despises heaven and ridicules hell, and meets death with the feelings and dispositions of a demon. On the other hand, the hope of the believer is joyous, and will be more than realized. Oh blessed hope of the gospel: "From its promises and declarations he learns that the body, here sown in corruption, weakness, and dishonour, shall be raised, beyond the grave, in incorruption, power, and glory, with so many attributes of mind or spirit as to be denominated by him who made it, 'a spiritual body.' Ever young, active, and undecaying, it shall be re-united to the immortal mind, purified from every stain and every error. Yes, he rejoices in the confidence that this perfect man shall be admitted, 'with an open and abundant entrance,' into the heaven of heavens, the peculiar residence of Infinite Majesty, and the chosen seat of infinite dominion: that, in this noblest of all habitations, this mansion of everlasting joy, he shall be united with an innumerable multitude of companions like himself, sanctified, immortal, and happy: that he shall be enrolled among the noblest and best beings in the universe, a child, a priest, a king, in the house of his heavenly Father, that his only, his endless destination will be to know, to love, to serve, and enjoy God; to interchange the best affections and the best offices with his glorious companions, and to advance in wisdom, virtue, and happiness for ever."—*(Dwight.)* Oh glorious hope! to God be everlasting praise.

DECEMBER 21.

"*Thou hast made summer and winter.*"—Psalm lxxiv. 17.

In the arrangements of Divine Providence the winter is as good and necessary in its place and season as any other part of the year. Still it is a dreary time to all, and often it is a distressing one to many. When the eye looks round for a cheering object, it looks in vain. The fields are stripped of their luxuriance; the trees and hedge-rows are despoiled of their foliage; the meadows and lawns are scathed and bleached with the rains and storms of the season. Where ten thousand gay and beautiful flowers lately expanded their leaves, and displayed their heaven-painted colours to the beams of a summer's sun, nothing is to be seen but here and there a naked, withered, bending, or broken stalk. The earth looks like the dying-chamber of nature, and the pall of a dreary, cold, and desolate barrenness hangs over the face of the world. What an emblem is all this of man on earth, and of all his earth-born and creature comforts. A few years bring us into the winter of human life, and then friends, and health, and strength, and relatives, and every thing that once amused or delighted us, are seen to droop and die. With one voice they tell us that a winter's visitation has overtaken them all. Yes, they are all withered, they are faded, they are gone! But, blessed be the Lord! his word and promise remain the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. And whom he loveth, he loveth unto the end of time, and through all eternity. Because he lives, they shall live also. Then

> "Let sickness blast, let death devour,
> If heaven shall recompense our pains,
> Perish the grass, and fade the flower,
> If firm the word of God remains."

DECEMBER 22.

"*Follow after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*"—Heb. xii. 14.

"TRUE holiness consists in a conformity to the nature and will of God, whereby a *saint* is distinguished from the unrenewed world, and is not actuated by their principles and precepts, nor governed by their manners and customs." It may be summed up, as it all is contained, in the love and delightful service of God and of our fellow-creatures. Yet, alas, how low and poor are our highest and best attainments in this world. "When we attempt to love God here on earth, and by the alluring discoveries of grace try to raise our affections to things of heaven, what sinful damps and coldness hang heavy upon us? What counter-allurements do we find towards sin and the creature, by the mischievous influences of the flesh and this world? What an estrangedness from God do the best of Christians complain of? And when they get nearest to their Saviour in the exercises of holy love, they find perpetual reason to mourn over their distance."—*(Watts.)* But cheer up, my soul, it will not be always thus. When Christ Jesus shall appear to thee as thy ransomer and judge, thou shalt not only behold him with joy, but thou shalt be made like him. Thy soul shall be washed and cleansed from all unholiness, and as thy eternal years shall roll on, the body will be raised in holiness also: and then body, soul, and spirit, shall eternally serve the Lord in all that beauty of holiness which characterizes all the inhabitants and all the transactions of heaven. Lord, do thou enable me, while on earth, daily more and more to perfect holiness in thy fear and love, that I may become more meet for the inheritance of the saints in light.

DECEMBER 23.

"Oh, that I had wings like a dove! for then would I fly away and be at rest. I would hasten my escape from the windy storm and tempest."—Psalm lv. 6, 8.

WHAT a cold and cheerless scene has our part of the world this day presented! Rain, and snow, and wind, have marked its whole course. The sun has been deeply shrouded by a heavy and storm-laden atmosphere; and the earth has shown a barrenness and desolation that sadly depresses the spirits of the invalid. Yet, on this very day there have been other regions of our earth lit up in all the splendour and warmth, in all the richness and beauty, of a tropical world, where the sky has been without a cloud, and the trees and vines have been laden with every luxurious variety of fruits, and with every beauty and variety of coloured blossoms. What a contrast! And how would such a scene tend, according to man's judgment, to sooth the pains of the body and to cheer the drooping spirits of thousands of mankind, and of myself among the rest, could I take the wings of the dove and fly to them far from our wintry storms and tempests! But this must not be. It would be vain to ask, and vain to expect it. Well, then, I will endeavour not even to desire it. Blessed Lord, there is still one region, one happy climate, to which I may bend my thoughts, and on which I may fix all my desires, my hopes, and expectations, without either displeasing thee or disappointing myself, a world

> "All o'er whose wide extended plains
> Shines one eternal day:
> Where God the Sun for ever reigns,
> And scatters night away.
>
> "Where chilling wind, and pois'nous breath,
> Ne'er reach that healthful shore:
> Where sickness, sorrow, pain, and death,
> Are felt and fear'd no more."

DECEMBER 24.

"*Set your affections on things above, and not on things on the earth.*"—Coloss. iii. 2.

THIS sin and folly beset the whole human race; all men, until grace has renewed the heart, do completely reverse the words of the Apostle, and one and all of them do set their affections on things on the earth, and not on things above; and the consequence is, that after a life of disappointment, and bitterness of spirit, they die, and find themselves most justly and eternally excluded from those good things they neglected and despised in time. Oh, how utterly contemptible, how utterly insignificant, must every mere earthly, perishing object be seen, when the spirit, disrobed of its earthly, dying companion, stands forth in the presence of its Judge, and in the light of an eternal world, sees things as they really are and have been! How must those, at present despised and disregarded words of our Lord sound in the condemned sinner's ear, "What shall it profit a man, though he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" "What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Most gracious God, dispose my heart in all solemnity every day to view, to estimate, and to long for those things that are above. Give me a deadness of soul to things below. Let the emptiness and vanity of earth's best bestowments hold the same place in my estimation now that they will hold when I, by experience, understand what that awful word *eternity* means. I know thou hast given many things to be enjoyed by us in the flesh, but to really and safely enjoy them, I must ever read their true character, and that is, empty, fading, perishing things.

DECEMBER 25.

" In vain the beam of parting light
In various hues expires,
And through this hemisphere, the night
Lights up her gentle fires,
For in these gay, these shifting scenes,
The spirit has no share,
When clouds of sickness intervene,
And rest with sadness there."

READER, art thou one who knows from experience the truth of these lines? Hast thou often felt

" A languor and disease invade
Thy trembling house of clay?"

Have wearisome days and nights been, at seasons, appointed for thee? Has the spring and the summer each broken on the world, and on thy neighbours around thee, and thyself meanwhile been confined to a sick-bed, and with all the beauties of nature curtained off from thy view, and all the songs of birds shut out from thy hearing? If so, thou hast felt that man's consolations must be sought for in a distant world, and found, if found at all, where the changes and sorrows of earth can never come. Have these seasons of painful visitation been rendered profitable to thy soul? Hast thou returned again into the world with more of heaven in thine heart than before thou wast afflicted? If so, bless the Lord for it, and when again thou art laid by, may that soul be able to look heavenward and say,

" There the divine Redeemer reigns,
And ransom'd nations rest;
There saints, forgetting former pains,
Repose upon his breast.
There will I fix my dying eyes,
Till life's fast setting ray,
Steals from this darkening sphere—to rise
In everlasting day."

DECEMBER 26.

"*Thou art good, and doest good.*"—Psalm cxix. 68.

HERE six short words declare truths and facts which all the angels in heaven, and all the inhabitants of this earth, will never be able, through an endless eternity, fully to investigate, comprehend, or describe. However deep and mysterious the subject may be, yet it is manifestly clear, that there must have been a period in the annals of an unborn eternity, when the eternal Jehovah was the only being or thing in existence. If it be asked, wherefore did it seem good to this eternal, self-existing, self-sufficient God, to come forth and to call into being worlds, and angels, and men, there is an answer at hand. Pure, unbounded, unmerited, unsolicited goodness, moved him to do so. Infinitely blessed, happy, and complete in himself, he can gain nothing in any of these respects, except the gratification of producing happiness; the mere benevolence of the divine nature moved him to call forth into existence worlds upon worlds, and systems upon systems, and to spread abroad his mighty works through the boundless extent of what was once a mysterious, fathomless region of nothingness, or empty space. "He himself is the sum of all excellence, of all that is great, or wise, or good. By calling worlds, and angels, and men into existence, he was therefore only manifesting his own boundless existence, and wisdom, and benevolence, to the creatures he had made. And now and for ever will the inhabitants of heaven have these manifestations of the Eternal continually passing before them. And for ever will they behold, through this endless medium, everlasting cause of wonder, love, and praise."

DECEMBER 27.

"*The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.*"—1 John ii. 17.

How loudly do all the changing events of time proclaim that the world passeth away! And how strikingly emblematical of human life are the seasons of the year. Each and all of them good and necessary in themselves, but not each so comfortable or joyous as the other. So with respect to the stages of human life! *Winter* is a gloomy season to the outward senses, and often it is a complete blank as to many of our enjoyments: and so is the winter of man's life. Grace can make it a profitable season, but still it is, more or less, an unpleasant one. Were it not for the cheering prospects opened before us in the everlasting gospel, and which carry the eye of faith far beyond all sublunary hopes, and things of time, of change, and trial, methinks the down-hill of life must be sad and sorrowful indeed. For what are the accompaniments of the winter of man's days? Alas! we cannot but see his health failing, his strength departing, his memory, his sight, and his hearing giving way. Pains, and weariness, and languor, and irritability, take more and more hold of him. Friends, and lovers, and relations, are dead or dying. Change after change is sweeping all old and long familiar and favourite objects off the stage, and a new order of things takes their place; a new generation of men are rising up, who enter not into the feelings, the fears, and hopes of the bending and slowly-moving pilgrim. Oh, were it not for the ever-brightening, the boundless hopes set before us in the gospel of eternal life, the winter of our days on earth would be sad indeed!

DECEMBER 28.

" Return, O blissful sun, and bring
The soul-reviving ray;
This mental winter shall be spring,
This darkness cheerful day."

Not only is the gloomy, wintry day a picture of the mind when in heaviness through manifold temptations; but in the nature of things it is often the means of producing such a mental gloom and depression of spirits as robs the Christian of almost every comfortable and happy feeling for a season. This is indeed an infirmity, and not a sin; but it is such an infirmity as calls for a degree of sympathy which the dejected heart seldom meets with, and which many individuals know not how to bestow, for none can truly know this secret until they have learnt it in their own experience. Men, in the full enjoyment of strong health, of unshaken nerves, and of but a small portion of natural tenderness, may pass through all seasons and weathers with little difference either of comfort or uneasiness; but it is not so with others, every change in the atmosphere affects their body, and the body greatly affects the spirits, and they feel, both within and without them, that it is gloomy winter. At these seasons we shall do well to look forward. It may be that we are to live to see another smiling spring and another glorious summer on earth, and throughout their lengthened and brightened days to be permitted to gather in much refreshment both to body and soul. But as this is still to us uncertain, we should especially labour to keep a steady eye fixed on that blessed world where Jesus makes all things new; where there is no night, either natural or mental; no winter in the elements or in the heart; no sorrow, but joy unspeakable; no pain, but pleasures at God's right-hand for evermore.

DECEMBER 29.

"*He who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come Lord Jesus.*"—Rev. xxii. 20.

With these words did the Creator of angels and of men conclude his solemn and gracious revelation, and with such a reply did the beloved disciple answer his condescending God and Saviour. And in such a frame of mind would I pray to wait thy coming, most blessed Jesus; and in such a state of feeling would I desire to meet and hail thy messenger death, whenever thou shalt see fit to summon me hence. Thou, who art my desired portion, hast held out many great and precious promises, that thou wilt be with thy praying and believing children unto the end; and wherefore should I doubt the experience of it myself. I know that I am a poor worthless sinner, utterly destitute of one atom of justifying righteousness. I know, moreover, that I am, and ever must be, a condemned criminal, whenever thou shalt enter into judgment with me on account of but one day's conduct. Yet I also know that thou didst "for us men, and for our salvation, come down from heaven." Yes, to seek and to save exactly such lost and condemned sinners as myself. Come then, thou sin-atoning Lamb of God, and claim me as one of thy ransomed people, and I will love and adore thee for ever.

"And then, never more shall the fears,
The trials, temptations, and woes,
Which darken this valley of tears,
Intrude on my blissful repose."

"Or if yet remember'd above,
Remembrance no sadness shall raise;
They will be but new signs of thy love,
New themes for my wonder and praise."

DECEMBER 30.

"*Consider your ways.*"—Haggai, i. 5.

LORD, this is a bounden duty at all times, and more especially so as the year draws to a close, and my days are hastening to their end. First, then, O my soul, humble thyself before him who searches the heart and tries the reins of the children of men. Three hundred and sixty-four days of this year are nearly run out. And O, my merciful and gracious God, how much hast thou beheld through them that ought not to have been found in me! What sins of commission and of omission? How many duties either wholly neglected, or but half performed! How little of love, of faith, of hope, of victory! If I have not deeply grieved the Holy Ghost by gross and open sins, yet, alas, how little have I honoured my Redeemer; how little have I recommended his gospel to the world by my life and conversation! How much have I been perplexed and estranged from thee by means of the creature and of perishing things! All my doings have been imperfect or actually polluted with sins of thought, of word, or of deed! And now the year is almost expired; oh, what shall I do in the end thereof? I will fly, yea, I will

> "Haste to that fountain fill'd with blood
> Drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
> Where sinners plung'd beneath that flood
> Lose all their guilty stains."

And, O my blessed God, I would remember and trust, that as

> "The dying thief rejoiced to see
> That fountain in his day;
> E'en so may I, though vile as he,
> Wash all my sins away."

DECEMBER 31.

" Rise, my soul, and stretch thy wings,
Thy better portion trace;
Rise from transitory things,
Towards heaven thy native place:
Suns, and moons, and stars decay,
Time shall soon the earth remove;
Rise, my soul, and haste away
To seats prepared above."

And is the last day, and the last evening of the year now arrived? And am I spared, amidst sundry kinds of death! and have I a cheering hope with which to look forward from time into eternity, while millions are gone and multitudes have perished! Oh, that my very soul could be swallowed up "in wonder, love, and praise." Lord, I would close the year with deep self-abasement, and I would also close it in all gratitude and praise. As the year expires, I would pray for the expiration of all the remains of sin that still cleave to me. And as its expiring hours bring my body nearer to the grave, I pray that the Holy Ghost may lift my soul nearer to heaven. Farewell, sweet year! thou wast given me by the Father of all mercies, and although thou shalt never see me again, his eye will ever be upon me, and his power and grace will, I trust, hold me up. Through thy gone-by months I have heard his voice of love and mercy in many of thy events. And if some painful trials and sharp afflictions have chequered my course, yet mercy and goodness have followed me through all these days. And I would humbly hope that I shall by and by dwell in the house of the Lord for ever. Farewell, kind year! I trust thou hast borne me onward so much nearer to "Jesus, the crown of my hope," whose precious blood will blot out all thou hast seen amiss, and whose boundless merits will crown me with glory and immortality in a better, an unexpiring world!

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